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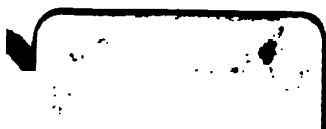
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THE
HELLENIAD
BY
GEORGE M^CHENRY.



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7

THE
HELLENIAD,

AN EPIC POEM,

FOUNDED ON THE EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE SUCCESSIVE
INVASIONS OF ANCIENT GREECE BY THE PERSIANS.

PART FIRST.

THE WRATH OF DARIUS.

BY

GEORGE M^cHENRY.



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SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.

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PREFACE.

To illustrate the greatest event that has occurred since the creation of the world—an event that rescued Europe from the despotism of Asia, and saved the human mind from bondage, and civilisation from fetters—is surely as worthy of the pen of the poet as of the annalist. The Father of History selected it as the subject of his memorable work, approved of by the voice of Greece, at the celebrated Olympic Games.

The first part of the Poem is now published, under the title of "THE WRATH OF DARIUS," because all the incidents comprised in it arise from the anger entertained by that monarch against the Greeks. It contains an account of the first invasion of Greece by the Persians, under Mardonius, and of the second, under Datis and Artaphernes, which ended by their defeat, at the illustrious battle of Marathon.

The second portion I intend to denominate "THE PRIDE OF XERXES;" and I expect it to contain about as much matter as the first: and to the whole work, then



IV.

comprehending the three different expeditions against Greece, I have affixed the designation of "THE HELLENIAL," from Hellas, the ancient appellation of the country, or from Hellen, son of Deucalion and Pyrrha, king of Phthiotis, whose two sons, Æolus and Dorus, and grandson, Ion, gave their names to the three respective nations or tribes of Greece, known as the Æolians, Dorians, and Ionians.

LIVERPOOL,

14TH JUNE, 1850.

THE HELLENIAD.

BOOK I.

IN the pyreum, or fire-temple, attached to the palace of Persepolis, assembled, DARIUS and his court offer up their matin orisons, while the high priest officiates at the altar. The service ended, the monarch, on his way to the hall of state, is accosted by a messenger from Sardis, who informs him of the revolt of the Ionians, their seizure of that town, and its recapture by the Persians. DARIUS swears to be revenged on the Athenians and Eretrians, who had aided his subjects, the revolted Ionians; and is further strengthened in this resolution by the representations of HIPPIAS, who had just arrived at Sardis, and offers him the sovereignty of the realm of Attica, of which he had been the prince, but then banished. Some inauspicious omens occurring, DARIUS breaks up the court, and retires to his harem, where he is joined by ARTYSTONE, the favourite amongst his wives.

IN Chehl-Menâr's grand palace, by the Greeks¹
Yclept Persepolis, in olden days,
Before a sumptuous altar stood the great
Darius, king of Persia, by a crowd
Of Achæmenian princes, satraps, wives,
And concubines attended, while a crowd

IV.

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LIVERPOOL,
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the breath
contain,
of life,
in dew or rain,
from the clouds,
in the stream,
the lake or marsh
the surface of the sea
When the earth is struck with drought,
sicken and to die:
implores thee; flocks and herds
and despondent man
in supplicating prayer:
in life-diffusing showers.
the ever fruitful womb
be blessed evermore,
the earth impregnates, the mass inform
that motion unto matter gives!
the stars, the myriad eyes of God,
in darkness, and illumine night;
that lightens earth, and sun that shines,
of day, and ruler of the skies,

smmoth of Siberian wastes,
 dances in the light
 quished by the eye.
 no body then,
 spark
 he fount

Golden days
 face
 joyed the scene, and some
 on waxed warm again
 advanced, with muffled face,
 on cloth, lest mortal breath
 corruptible should stain,
 cincture girt, mysterious zone,
 with signs symbolic. From the book
 roaster, the ancient prophet who
 in former ages had reformed the rites
 Of Magian worship, first in Bactria taught
 By Indian sages from the sunny clime
 Of Hindostan, the archimagus read
 This cosmogonic homily, in voice
 Low whispering, while his left hand held aloft
 The sacred branch. All present then put up
 Their prayers for various blessings, such as each
 Considered were adapted to his wants:
 Unconsciously some there for favours sued,
 Which might have proved dire curses, had they been
 Granted to their desires: not what we wish
 That should we pray for, but what God may choose
 To give, who gives what is the best for all,
 Who often sends us evil for our good,
 And good to prove our evil: when we pray,
 Then let us ask that what may turn to be
 Our ill, may be refused, however much

Esteemed our good, and that his providence
May grant the boon we need, although unasked.*
Thus ran the lesson from the litany,
The archimagus with prostrations read.
“ In the beginning Ormuzd was alone
Existent, through infinities of age,
Wrapt up in self, in perfect happiness.
At length it pleased him not to be alone :
Therefore the seven archangels, first and best
Of all created beings, he formed, and placed
Beside his throne, his glory and his power
To share, and rule the hierarchies of heaven
When the inferior angels were by him
Created, whom he next created. Then
The heavens he made, the suns, and moons, and stars ;
And hung them in the sky, self-poised, and each
Revolving in its orbit, and the air
Them to invest as with a garment bound ;
Light from the darkness separating quick
As thought could will the omnipotent decree.
Next, waters in the hollow of his hand †
He formed, and into ocean, rivers, rain,
And dew divided them ; assigning each
Its place : the dew to wed the air, and bring
The vernal flowers forth ; the rains to swell
The fecund earth, and harvests to produce
Prolific ; rivers, earth when parched with drought.
To cool, and feed the seas ; and seas, to give
Back their abundance from the streams received.
Next earth he made, receptacle of life.
Trees, plants, and shrubs another labour cost :
Untired, the great Divinity still worked ;
He willed, and lo ! from out the ground came forth
All living things, that move, creep, swim, or walk,


From the huge mammoth of Siberian wastes,
To the small fly that dances in the light
Of summer, scarce distinguished by the eye.
Last, man he made, all soul, no body then,
An immaterial essence, with a spark
Divine within him, effluent from the fount
Of Deity as a ray is from the sun.
Earth then and heaven were one; and golden days
On both shone bright, for Ormuzd shewed his face
To all the world, and from his smiles diffused
Felicity to all : then peace and love,
United, reigned supreme : the fertile soil
Spontaneous flowers and fruits produced ; the herbs
No canker killed, nor mildew plants deformed :
Then friendship linked the bestial race in bonds
Of mutual trust, the wolf then licked the lamb,
The lion frolicked with the fawn, the dove
The eagle fled not : violence and prey
Were then unknown, and war was then unlearned ;
Nor air, nor earth, nor ocean was the seat
Of brute contention : love was void of lust :
Hate, envy, avarice, and ambition then
Were aliens to the heart, and to the mind
Pride was a stranger : man was then a god,
The lord of all on earth, where all was joy.
Evil was then unborn : but Ormuzd thought
If power be unopposed, although supreme,
How shall it seem omnipotent ; how bliss
Be grateful, if unmixed with woe. This thought
Conceived, and with maternal pangs gave birth
To ills, a monstrous progeny, to man
The source of huge afflictions. Will is fate
When power almighty is. By all his bands
Of angels and archangels followed, rode

In a triumphant chariot, to the verge
Of space, then circumscribed, to the utmost bound
Of light, where chaos all the realm beyond
Held in continual turmoil, where the void
Gaped black and hideous, deep beyond all depth,
A grave to swallow up the universe,
Ormuzd, who stretched his hand above the waste
Of darkness hissing : " Gather, all ye seeds
Of discord, gather to a central heap ?"
Said the omnific word. The darkness grew
To thickest night, till in the depth of gloom
It seemed a substance, tangible to touch,
And to the sight repulsive ; what till then
Had been a tumult now to loudest din
Increased, so loud, the heavens affrighted shook,
Stars, loosened from their hinges, from the sky
Fell with a crash, suns sickened, and turned pale ;
And the dread comets in their burning paths,
Exhaling sweats of anguish, stopped, entranced
With horror, as with the impetuous rush
Of hurricanes the elements conjoined,
Rolling as when the heaving billows haste
Towards the central gulf, by tempests lashed
To speed, and by the voice of Whirlpool called,
Who grimly sits with wide insatiate maw
His fated prey to gorge. All evils there
Were congregated, all plagues, all sores, all pains,
Each noxious embryo, which developed, grows
A bane to blast or kill. Then Ormuzd spake,
" Out of this tomb of darkness rise, O King
Of Death and Hell !" Straight all the mass upheaved,
Crackling with hideous noise, more dreadful now
By thousand terrors than the din erstwhile ;
A simoom swept the air, red cataracts

Of boiling fire with fierce combustion streamed,
A sea of ruin, thunder rattled harsh,
And lightnings volleyed with terrific blaze,
Blinding the sight, while nature groaned and sighed,
As from the abyss rose up the grisly form
Of Ahriman. A tortuous knot of snakes
Frizzled his head, in lusty folds entwined,
Crushing his temples, or in circling spires
Upreared, shot venom from their darts ; his face
Glowed like a furnace, or the crater fired
Of Ætna, when the blazing sulphur throws
Defiance to the gods, and threatens war
With heaven ; his breath, a horrid pestilence,
Consumed whate'er it touched ; war from his eyes
A bloody meteor flamed ; and round him trooped
A brood of monsters, 'mongst them Sin and Death.
The very angels, trembling, stood aghast
At sight so dreadful, and e'en Ormuzd's self,
Could he have feared, then terror would have felt.
Such was the birth of Evil in the world,
Evil to prove the power of Good the more,
To try the virtue of mankind, and shew
Man's glory forth, the glory of his God
Infused to be his own, when Ahriman
Shall tempt him : let him therefore trust in God,
And fear no ill, no ill then can him harm."

Again from censers clouds of incense flung,
The God, whose presence in the fervent thoughts
Of votaries seemed to consecrate the place,
Concealed from vision, and to heaven uprapt.
In silence all retired until they reached
The ante-chamber : there they formed their ranks
Deep filed, while foremost, music from a band

Of drums and cymbals led the cavalcade
In pomp and splendour to a hall of state,
With measured steps to sounds that beat a march
Majestic. Soon the corridors are passed,
And the wide terrace gained, an open space
Where fifty horsemen all could ride abreast,
Of polished marble built, whose hue the snow
Of Scythia, hardened by the polar blast,
Could hardly match, so purely white it was.
While there, a tumult from the crowd below,
Assembled in the palace court, announced
Some strange event, explained when into view
From out a grove of hoary oaks advanced
A horseman, dashing down the mountain side
With speed so swift, it seemed the steep descent
Fled from his path, so fleet he rattled on :
Another shout the welkin rings around,
And thousand voices with acclaim pronounce,
" The courier from Sardis ! " Scarce were said
These words, whose echoes scarce had died away,
When at the monarch's feet, with dust and sweat
Begrimed, his features purple with the breath
Spasmodic heaving, which his hurried speech
Checked interruptedly, the rider fell
Prostrate, and thus explained the news he 'd brought.
" Long live Darius ! live for ever king !
May Ormuzd always prosper thee as now
He showers his blessings ! Tidings I have brought
To thee propitious, and to all thou rulest,
Whom ruling, from thee as from God receive
Favours innumerable, although thy slaves.
The Ionian traitors, who had flown to arms,
Thy rule disowned, and power thoughtless scorned,
Have been defeated. By the Athenians joined



With twenty ships, and from Eretria five,
The rebels gained the town of Ephesus,
Where having left their vessels, quick they marched
To Sardis, and the city, unprepared
For an attack so sudden, was surprised,
And overpowered. By revenge inspired,
Or malice, or the love of mischief, they
Cast blazing firebrands, which the houses, roofed
Mostly of thatch, ignited, so that flames,
Like billows of the sea, swept o'er the town,
Reduced to smoking ruins : every house
Through many a street down toppled to the ground ;
The fane of Cybele was also burnt—
Consumed to ashes. In the rush were crowds
Killed by the press of numbers, or thrown down,
Were trampled underfoot : here mothers sought,
Frantic, their sleeping babes to snatch and fly ;
In vain, the fire, more swift than mother's love,
Them had already snatched : there crippled Age,
And Manhood maimed, with efforts impotent
To save a life it were a gain to lose,
Met Death with howling curses, though in prayer
They 'd oft invoked him, then in thought less feared
Than pain, now present worse than all the ills
That life can suffer, when no truce to ease
Uninterrupted, interminable pain
Will yielding give. Meanwhile the citadel,
Whither had Artaphernes with the troops
Retired, escaped the conflagration, held
Out 'gainst the rebels ; and the Persians joined
Now by the crowds of Lydians, from their homes
Retreating, on the Ionians, all employed
In plunder, scattered straggling through the town
In bands disordered, fell with onslaught dire,

And them repulsed. Them swiftly flying back
To Ephesus, more swiftly than they'd come,
The Persians overtook, and them again
Defeated; so complete the rout, that few
Escaped the avenging sword, that reeked with blood
The whole day long; for long the rebels fought,
And longer still the Persians, fired with rage,
Pursued the fugitives. Down to the shore
The Athenians hurried, and on board their ships
Embarked, and expeditiously set sail.
Of all thy foes, O King! they have alone
Escaped, and live unpunished, since the rest
Have with their lives their faults already atoned."
He ended; and the royal pride aroused,
Stung to the quick at insult unprovoked,
And injury left unrevenged, replied:
"They shall not go unpunished; they shall find
To rouse our anger is a task less safe
Than face the famished lion in his den.
But who are these Athenians?"

"Sovereign lord,
Earth's emperor, and representative
Of Ormuzd on the earth! they are a race,"
Answered Mardonius,—who had late espoused
The monarch's daughter, hence in favour great
At court just then,—“they are a race renowned
More for the arts of peace than feats of arms,
Unknown to fame; their country is a waste,
Barren and bleak, where patient industry
May raise a vineyard, or an olive patch,
But golden harvests shun the sterile soil;
Withal so insignificant, a troop
Of thousand horse the realm could overrun.”

"Bring me my bow," exclaimed Darius, fierce
With rage, his brows compressed until the eyes
Glistened like lurid stars through thunder clouds,
When storms are mustering strength, "that Scythian bow
The one-eyed Arimasian sorcerer made,
With which he fought the gryphons, to purloin
The treasures hoarded in their nests, a heap
Inestimable, a mount of wealth. This shaft,
Said the magician when he gave it me,
Will send an arrow to the crystal gates
Of Heaven, and carry messages to God :
'T is formed of ribs of behemoth, that lay
Tempered by frost for ages in the sea
Of ice that bounds the pole, where living man
Would cease to live, killed instantly by cold ;
Steeped in volcano's fire, 't was beaten out
By deeves on diamond anvils, with a sledge
Of loadstone, that mysterious ore that points *
Still to the north ; its tips are gemmed with stars,
The fossilized enamel of a tooth,*
To stone impetrified ; in dragon's blood
'T was dipped, then boiled in juice of potent herbs ;
The very string is twisted gossamer,
Spun by the winds, on solemn, silent nights,
And tintured in the rainbow's various dyes ;
A charmed bow, endued with wondrous power."

From out the golden quiver, much adorned
With orient gems, he then an arrow picked,
Made of an Indian reed that seemed instinct
With motion, and so tremulous to touch,
It wanted but a zephyr's breath to wing
Its flight : no cotton in the fertile fields
Of Delhi, ever fluttered in the air

So lightly, sporting with the balmy winds
Wafted from spicy shrubs. Then drawing tight
The string, until the barbed point the bow
Touched, and the shaft itself was nearly bent
A circle round, reverberating clacked
The shaft, and whizzing rapid to the clouds,
The arrow flew, and high and higher still
Mounted the sky, and vanished from the sight.
Thus the bold eagle, borne on pinions strong,
Spurning the earth, to fields empyrean hies,
Untired, a speck in space ethereal seems
Awhile, then lost to vision, reaches near
The precincts of the sun, where glories shine.
As thus his message up to heaven climbed,
With arm uplifted, and an aspect grave,
Sedate, and humble, for devotion bows
All human pride, e'en pride imperial bows,
And prayer confounds the lofty with the low,
Darius sued for favour, and ne'er looked
In all his pomp so dignified as now ;
For prayer, uniting earth with heaven, gives
To man celestial majesty. Thus sued
To Heaven's Monarch, earth's despotic king :—
“ O Lord of hosts angelic, whom the choirs
Of seraphs, hymning on their golden harps
Thy praise, adore ; who rul'st all time and space,
And fate, the ruler of all else beside,
Commandst, if e'er Darius in thy sight
Was pleasing, if thine altars he have heaped
With offerings grateful, and have reigned with fear
Of thy dread laws o'er nations whom thy will
Has granted to his sway, with constant aim
To make them happy, tempering power supreme
With justice, justice with such mercy joined,


As from thy justice man may hope to obtain,
Hear me! A race of miscreants, least esteemed
By thee, have dared with their assaulting arms
To attack my empire: infidels are leagued
With traitors 'gainst me, and idolaters
'Gainst thy true worshipers: me, who never them
Injured by thought or deed, whose very name
Was to me until now unknown, have they
Despised, insulted, hurt, thy deputy
On earth—the earthly of thy heavenly power.
Retaliate, I pray thee, soon the wrongs
I have received; let ample punishment—
A retribution fair for their offence—
O'ertake them swiftly, swiftly though they have
Eluded vengeance hitherto, lest they
And all the heathen, flushed with insolence,
Should, by escaping with impunity,
Audacious, impious, sacrilegious grown,
Scorn me, and thee learn to despise likewise.”

Just as he 'd finished speaking, from a cloud
A flash of lightning rent the crackling air,
And a strong blast, rebuffing from the shock,
The arrow caught, and in the eddy hurled
It circling: down it fell upon the ground,
And struck a rock, and, splintered by the blow,
Shivered to fragments. All in dumb amaze,
Stood pondering from this omen what might hap;
Afraid to speak their thoughts, for sore distrust
Had seized them; but Darius, undismayed
Alone, beheld the prodigy, and smiled,
Or tried to smile; although his heart was faint,
Yet, with an inward struggle, he subdued
All show of fear, and 'midst the panic crowd


Looked like a god, most fit to lead and rule
The abject herd, whom every sign appals,
Who shudder at the phantoms their own thoughts
Have conjured up, and at a shadow start.
Let such be ever slaves, they 're slaves at heart !
But fear and wonder soon to reverence
Turned, when they saw the monarch was composed,
And heard his voice again to heaven appeal.
"The omen I accept; and joyful thank
Thee, Ormuzd, that so visibly expressed,
Thou showst thine anger 'gainst thy foes and mine.
E'en as this arrow, by the whirlwind caught,
Was flung to earth, and broken by the fall,
So thou wilt hurl the Athenians from their pride
Prostrate, and bow them lowly to the dust,
My humble slaves; or dash their arrant necks,
Shivered to atoms by indignant wrath."
Then to a Sogdian eunuch turning round,
Attendant faithful, ever at the call
Of his imperial master, him addressed.
"In order that my vengeance may not lack
Due recollection, that it may be fed
With constant thought, not, famished by neglect,
Expire exhausted, bloodless, and inane,
When at the banquet feasting, cry thou out
With a loud voice, at peril of thy life
If thou shouldst fail, Remember the Athenians!
But see, upon the mountain's towering brow
The clouds are gathering, mass on masses roll,
Bearing the tempest in their lusty folds;
'T is sultry, like the heat of noon, though morn;
The birds are silent, mute the insects' hum;
Yet from the neighbouring forest moans a sound,
Sullen and dismal; herds to woodlands move

For shelter, and the early ravens seek
Again the thickets they had scarcely left,
Returning home unfed. Let us retire."
Loud acclamations here ensued, in praise
Of their great king, from all the servile crowd,
Elated now as much as erst depressed
By terror, apprehensive of some ill
Portending to the state : so much do slaves
Fashion their feelings from their masters' mind ;
If sad, they 're sorrowful ; if gay, they 're glad ;
And if despondent, they 're in blank despair.
And as the cavalcade moved on, a buzz
Pervaded still the ranks ; from mouth to mouth
The busy tongue resounded honeyed words
In neighbours' ears, officious to express
Wonder, and admiration, and delight,
Till high strained flattery, surfeited, was sick,
And loathed the vomit of its own applause.

Now at the hall of state arrived, a room
Magnificent beyond all modern show
Of luxury, with walls of plated gold,
And polished silver, blazing with the sheen
Of countless gems ; vases of amber filled
With precious spikenard, and the fragrant oils
Of Araby and Ind, and couches lined
With silken tissues, woven in the looms
Of Serica,—Darius mounts his throne.
Of massive gold it was, fretted, embossed,
And sculptured ; by four pillars high upheld,
One at each corner ; one with diamonds set,
Bright as the stars ; another seemed a field,
When Spring unfolds the sprouting corn, so thick
With emeralds sown ; the third with rubies shone,



The fourth with sapphires, and the gay parterre
Of Flora in the month of June outvied,
When earth, by dews and solar rays impressed,
Teems with the summer flowers. A plane tree rose
Behind the throne, of solid gold composed,
And shadowed royalty beneath its boughs ;
And intermingled with the foliage, crept
An artificial vine, entwining round
The branches, and festoons of twinkling leaves
That rustled with the breeze, on every twig
Hanging, while clusters of the ripened grape,
Of precious jewels formed, allured the sight,
And tempted appetite. These were the gifts
Of Pythius, the Cœlenian merchant, famed
For wealth so countless, that his riches passed
The power of numbers, and the fancy strains
At such prodigious sums. The attendants now, —
Those that were called the monarch's ears, — proclaimed
The presence of a Grecian prince, who sought
An audience with the monarch. Straight appeared
The Athenian Hippias, who some years before
Had fled from Attica, from thence expelled
By the indignant populace, who scorned
To fear the thing that claimed to be their lord,
Whom slaves may dread, but whom the free disdain.
He fled to Sardis, and was well received
By Artaphernes, Lydia's satrap then :
There he, an exile, an asylum found,
A home, but found no country ; from a king
Become a beggar, and the worst of slaves,
Slave by his own free will ; too proud to work
For bread, too base to earn it with his sweat ;
His self-dependence he delivered up
For means of life protracting, when to die




Would have been worthier fame. To this low vice
Was added vengeance, to accomplish which
He sought the Persian monarch, to assist
His cause by offer of the Athenian realm,
And tribute, as lord paramount, should he
Be reinstated in his former power.

As in the hall he entered, downcast looked
The exile, restless and uneasy seemed
His whole deportment, sullen was his brow,
His eye unsteady, veering as to gaze
On things invisible, a painful smile,
Unnatural and forced, on quivering lips
Played troublous, as if malice feared to speak,
Lest what it said be censured, while a flush
Of shame lit up the pallor of his cheek :
Yet this was once a king ! O how unlike
The great Darius, who with welcome him
Greeted, as with a majesty and grace
Native to true nobility of soul,
His sceptre he extended, and, with voice
Bland as the zephyr in the groves of spring,
The humbled chief interrogated thus.


"What favour is it Hippias seeks, that we
Can grant ? Our power is absolute, nor knows
A limit to our bounty, unconfined
Except by prudence and by wisdom. Speak !"
The exile, low prostrated to the ground,
Touched with his hand the golden sceptre's tip,
Then manacled within his garment's sleeves,
The forms prescribed by courtesy, replied,
"If at thy feet a suppliant I am come,
O king ! it is to thee to express my thanks
For all the favours from thee I 've received :
My life, which otherwise had been the prey

Of my revolted subjects, and the means
Of rendering that existence thou hast saved
More grateful to enjoy. What were this life,
If to be hunted like a ravenous beast
From realm to realm, to be in hourly dread
Of perils, and in trembling eat the bread
Of sorrows endless? This, a living death,
Were worse than death itself. But by thy power
Protected, I have lived secure from harm :
In comfort and in affluence I have lived,
Thy vassal and thy slave. Hence I am come,
In gratitude for what thou hast conferred,
The sole return for so much bounty shewn,
To offer thee the kingdom I once ruled,—
A barren gift, perhaps, when he who gives
Has not the means of granting ; but thy power
Will stand in lieu of this defect, and gain
For thee what 's granted freely by my will,
Which, though it lack the power, may yet attest
My gratitude : now joined with my revenge,
It makes the offer to my heart more sweet
If thou accept it. Deign, then, gracious king,
To listen to thy suppliant, and receive
What once was his to be for ever thine !”
To whom Darius, with an aspect meek
With pity at the sight of grandeur low
Reduced ; yet with disdainful scorn to find
Misfortune so prostrated ; without strength
From pride or fortitude to firmly bear
Its burden, which, when firmly borne, becomes
Lightened by half ; moreover with a true
Instinctive insight to discover thoughts,
And read them, howsoever glozed in speech
Seductive, thus responded in these words.



"T is vengeance, I perceive, not gratitude
That oils the hinges of thy tongue, and opes
The portal of thy heart. Hast thou not learned
That to forgive an injury is man's
Most noble part, more glorious still in kings,
And most of all in him who is dethroned.
Then when most lowly he is more like God,
Who pardons when his justice would condemn.
If mercy never could appease the voice
Of retribution, earth and heaven itself
Would howl with all the torments of the damned.
O man perverse ! hath rage not worked thee woes
Sufficient that still more of evil haps
Thou wouldst incur, thus blindly to indulge
Thy malice and thy vengeance, which will turn
Thy punishment, not theirs, whom thou wouldst hurt.
Canst thou with plummet line the depth profound
Of ocean measure ? Vain indeed the task.
As vain for thee to sound thine own designs.
Canst thou tell whither flies the hurricane ?
As difficult to show where tends thy wrath.
Man's wisdom is but folly, and can see
Nought clearly,—not the moment that prolongs
His life a moment : fortune governs all :
You may propose, but fate will still dispose :
'T is God alone who sees where all is dark.
This counsel take—them whom thou thinkst thy foes
Hate so that they may be thy friends again,*
And never drive them to despair, lest they
May prove thy ruin, weak though they may seem :
The stag, at bay, will turn and wound the hound."
To this reproof, that like a spark of fire
Inflamed what Grecian pride within his soul
Remained, which kindled further as he spoke,

Answered the exile, who, although he felt
Indignant, yet preserved a mien composed.
“ What punishment ought I to fear, who seek
Retaliation only for the wrongs
I have received ? To none is vengeance due
Who but revenge the evils they ’ve endured.*
To suffer meekly is a woman’s part ;
Not man’s to bear indignities : shall I
The cheek once smitten to be smit again
Turn, like the coward vile ? the worm will twine
Round him that treads it. To submit to woes
With patience when the Heavens afflict us is
Virtue : ’t is magnanimity sometimes
To bravely struggle with an adverse fate :
It is a sight respected by the gods.¹⁰
But when our fellow creatures are our foes,
He were a slave who would not seek revenge
When injured ; and what injury so great
As a dear brother’s murder,—he a prince,
Slain by his subjects. Pardon for this crime
Were to subvert all thrones. No king were safe
From hired assassins ; and the dagger dipped
In royal blood, would from the royal hand
The sceptre wrest, and triumph o’er the crown.
To slay a common man is death by law :
Shall it be less than death to kill a king ?
Besides a brother’s murder, my own wrongs
Call loud for vengeance. The Athenian mob,
Excited by a band of demagogues,
Rose ’gainst my power, expelled me from the state,
And sought my life. Is this offence so small
As to be lightly thought of and forgot ?
Forgive it, and as great as thou mayst be,
Of Medes and Persians king, and lord of earth,



'Thou mayst repent such clemency indulged :
For power that lacks enforcement often tempts
The bold to question it : let kings but fail
To punish, and their sceptres are but wands
For fools to laugh at, and the wise to scorn."
Swayed by this speech, Darius then replied,
Touched to the quick where most susceptible.
"Thou hast prevailed. The majesty of kings
Should be so sacred in the subjects' sight,
That conspiracy should be reckoned crime
And sacrilege unpardoned. Monarchs are
The substitutes of Ormuzd on the earth—
The shadows of his substance ; and as once
Rebellious angels down to hell were cast,
So should seditious rabble bite the dust.
Thy cause besides is mine : the miscreant knaves
Whom thou arraignst, have in their folly dared
To attack mine arms, and joined themselves in league
With traitors 'gainst me, who have always been
A father to my people. Hence I pledge
My power to succour thee ; and now confirm
My former purpose with a sacred oath.
I swear by Ormuzd that from out my mind
The affront I 've suffered never shall be rased,
Till it by due atonement be amerced :
The day I shall forget it, for that night
May sleep forget to weigh mine eye-lids down,
May I lack food, and be consumed with thirst,
My prayers to Heaven, caught by envious winds,
Be back returned to earth, and may the arms
Of Persia, now esteemed invincible,
Be broken by the Grecian shield and lance."

Here a loud peal of thunder shook the walls,




Darius interrupting, and all eyes
Directed to the roof that seemed to crack,
Rent by the bolt; thus seemed, but was not so.
It was the climax of the storm, that burst
Its fury near, upon a neighbouring hill,
And there had struck a giant oak, the sire
Of the whole forest. Terror seized the king,
As well as all the attendants who were there,
Yet unobserved; for darkness, thick as night,
Then veiled the room, and each with his own fear
Was too much troubled to regard the looks
His neighbour wore; to whom Darius thus:—
“Break up the court! when the great gods in heaven
Contend, then men respectful should retire,”
He said, and quickly from the gorgeous throne
Descended, and within the deep recess
Of his seraglio straight withdrew, the crowd
Dispersing to their homes. When there arrived,
He down upon a golden couch reclined,
The bed of state, whereon he nightly slept;
Where, locked in Beauty’s arms, if e’er he dreamed
Of Heaven, it could not be a Paradise
Sweeter than this. A chest of treasures lay
Beneath his head, the royal bolster called;
And at his feet another, which contained
Thousands of talents. O how little worth
Were all the riches there deposited
To yield a little ease; for gloomy thoughts
Oppressed the monarch; wealth was then a dross:
It is the mind, in moments such as these,
That is the real mint. At length he rose,
And calling Malek, his attendant slave,
The Sogdian eunuch, bade him promptly bring
Artystone, whom he had late espoused,

Daughter of Cyrus, and the best beloved
Of all his wives. She came, in all the pomp
Of beauty, and around her shed a light
That dazzled admiration : who could look,
Nor feel inclined to linger still to gaze,
Must have been blind ; the fascinated eye,
As by a spell entranced, was charmed with bliss,
And charmed the tongue, for then no voice could speak
What the heart felt. 'T was love, but free from lust,
And wonder mixed with worship : 't is no sin
To worship what is lovely. If a crime,
Shut Nature up, the Bible where we read
God and his features perfect, and present
Man with the blotted book that Chaos prints
On leaves as black as are her types and ink ;
Illegible as hieroglyphics cut
On Theban monuments, or on a tomb,
The inscription rased by age. With downcast eyes,
Large drooping lids, that seemed to screen her soul,
Bashful within ; for in her eye her soul
Shone, as the sun in heaven shines at noon ;
And blushing deep, as when the horizon glows
At eve, when clasped in ocean's arms, the orb
Is lulled to rest, Artystone approached :
Whom viewing, half the gloom Darius felt
Vanished already, by the sight dispelled.
Thus when the horrid Nightmare, from her nest
Escaped, where in damp dripping caves she breeds
With toads and snakes, creeping with stealthy steps,
Seeks some damned murderer's bed to heat her limbs,
Gelid with cold, and in his warm embrace
Instils her venom, racked with dreadful pain,
Gasping for breath, he wakes, and joyful sees
The dawn, that frights the ghastly fiend away.

Her moving with a step so light, that Grace
Herself admired her, smiling with delight,
Darius, smitten with her charms, addressed.
“ Artystone ! my heart is sick with care ;
Some supernatural terror, near akin
To cowardice, unmans me, who till now
Feared nothing ; no, not when proud Babylon
Threw off my yoke, nor when the northern hordes
Of skin-clad nations threatened to invade
My wide dominions, nor when I the mounts
Of India traversed, of perpetual snow
The region, and reduced realms then unknown.
But some mysterious panic shakes me now ;
A sign alarms me ; and, though silent, speaks
Louder than trumpets brazen-tongued, and cries
To Persia woe and sorrow. Strange it is,
That I who dreaded nought of mortal power,
Should dread a shadow ; who with conquering arms
O’erran all Asia, should at my own thoughts
Start as at traitors. Can it be that I,
Who vanquished all the world, should be subdued
By empty fears, by fears as light as air ? ”

To this Artystone, with humid eyes,
To see her lord beloved in plight so sad ;
For tears were trembling on the silken fringe,
As dew on violets sleeping, by the sighs
Of zephyr cradled, meekly thus replied :—
“ My gracious lord ! though man the savage beasts,
The terror of the desert, jungle, brake,
Or wood, may conquer, though the lion shun,
And tiger fly his presence, and he tame
The wild horse and the elephant, and lead
The monsters in a chain, unto his will



Obedient, yet will he for ever be¹¹
 Slave to the fly, the canker-worm will blast
 His budding hopes, and all his ripening joys
 Locusts devour, and caterpillars destroy.
 Yet this perhaps in Providence is wise,
 To check man's haughty pride. O think, my lord !
 These apprehensions, that are not of earth,
 May be of heaven ; and to fear the gods
 Is no mere terror, but a homage just ;
 'T is wisdom, and not folly. This may turn
 A blessing, which thou deemst may prove a curse.
 Monarchs must suffer, as all human must ;
 And yet from pain is often good educed.
 The brilliant pearl, the jewel of thy crown,
 The humble oyster in its sickness bred ;
 Had it not suffered, there had been no gem
 Within its shell, but only flesh corrupt."¹²
 To whom the king, in accents more composed :—
 " The honey from the eglantine the bee
 Sips, is but gall to that sweet tongue of thine.
 Thou 'st drugged me with harmonious sounds, and I
 Am cured already. But I pray thee, touch
 Thy lute, and up to heaven lift me high,
 As low to hell I 'd sunk. Like thoughts of love,
 When love is promised bliss, thy music steals
 Care from himself, and makes him smile with joy."

The lady took her lute, and o'er the strings
 A prelude ran. The Spirits of the storm
 Their discords hushed to listen, and replied
 With soft-approving sounds, that murmuring spread
 Along the hills and valleys, till the woods
 Rejoiced, and nature seemed again revived.
 Then with a voice melodious, sweeter far

Than ever Syren sung, this song began.

Happy who, near thee, lives for thee alone,¹²
Who hears thee speak, and thinks it perfect bliss :
To whom thy sighs have sued, on whom has shone
Thy smile, who 's found Elysium in thy kiss !

From vein to vein the subtle fire of love
Darts to her heart, that flutters with delight :
From cloud to rolling cloud so lightnings move,
Till seems the sky to quiver with the light.

Confused all sounds strike ringing on her ear,
A gathering mist expands before her eyes :
She sees not, hears not, but in trembling fear,
And languor faints, pale, breathless, almost dies.

The music ended ; and impatient sprung
The king, and clasped the lady to his breast,
And on her lips a shower of kisses rained,
Till blushes sprung, the flowers of sweet desire ;
Then in a flood of eloquence outpoured
His swelling heart, filled brimming with the waves
Of rapture, like an ocean tempest-tost.
“ Oh, never since that day when from the bath¹⁴
Of myrrh fresh rising, like the goddess sprung
From ocean's surge, whom Greek idolaters
Adore, wast thou so pleasing to my sight,
That aches with bliss to view thee : dearer now
Than then ; though dearer then than all the earth
Could give besides. Were I some peasant swain,
In some rude wilderness or barren waste,
Obliged to toil for bread, with thee could I
Be happy, and desire no other lot :

The pomp of royalty, the diadem,
The sword and sceptre, treasures and command,
Could I resign for one sweet smile of thine,
And hold them worthless; even pain with thee
I could partake, and deem it but delight.
No, never when first to my bridal bed
They brought thee, blinding Darkness with the sheen
Of dazzling beauty, when the very Night
Was drunk with rapture, gazing on thy charms,
Didst thou inspire such passion as inspires
Me now, whose soul with love is all on fire.”
He spoke, and pressed her struggling in his arms,
Assuming anger, which her heart denied :
She chid, yet smiled, and frowning scornful, sighed.
Her zone he loosed, and felt her bosom throb,
Fluttering as when within its nest the bird ¹⁵
Is frightened by the hawk ; yet in her eye
Was yielding languor, and in all her looks
The soft endearments of the amorous wile.
Let Love enjoy its bliss : no words profane
Should lift the curtain of the sacred place,
The Holy of Holies, where with secret rites
He 's worshiped. Come, then, Silence, robed in night,
Veil the mysterious pleasures of the couch.

BOOK II.

UNDER the shade of a platane, in the garden attached to the palace of Persepolis, DARIUS discourses with his courtiers, amongst whom VIASA, a poet, from Hindostan, relates the history of ZOAK, a cruel usurper of the kingdom of Persia, in the fabulous ages, and his dethronement by Gow, a blacksmith, who employed his leathern apron as a standard for his followers. Excited by the narration, DARIUS resolves to make the apron the chief ensign of the realm, and to pursue immediately his contemplated war against the Greeks. Ambassadors are accordingly sent to the different states of Greece to demand earth and water, the badges of subjection. These are refused by Athens and Sparta, the former of which cities condemns the Persian heralds to be thrown down a cliff, and the latter into a well. Meanwhile MARDONIUS, with a large army, arrives in Thrace; but, in doubling Mount Athos, loses the greater portion of his fleet by a storm; he is besides attacked by the Brygi, a savage tribe, inhabiting the woods in the vicinity of his encampment; whom, however, he subsequently reduces to submission. But, as his forces had been so much impaired by the loss of his fleet, he is obliged to return to Asia, without effecting any important conquest in Greece.

WITHIN a garden, near the palace, sat
Under the platane's shade, that drives the plague
And all infections from the neighbouring air,
Darius and his court. Here every boon
That Nature to the seasons elsewhere gives
But sparsely, with an open hand profuse,
She showered in heaps. The luscious mango here,
Ambrosia fit for Ormuzd at the feasts
Of Paradise, midst lustrous foliage shone,

And tempted appetite to pluck and eat :
Nor less alluring hung the vermeil globes
Of the rose-apple, that forbidden fruit
That cheated Eve of Eden, so alleged
By eastern sages ; which the fancy still
Might cheat to think some blushing virgin's cheek,
On nuptial eve, when by the impatient voice
Of bridegroom urged to long reluctant bliss.
Beneath the ardour of the genial heat
The plantain baked its bread, the guava swelled
With nectar, and with sweetness filled the peach.
With graceful tresses streaming to the clouds,
The cocoa lifted up its head, and quaffed
The dews of heaven ; from the earth the cane
Distilled its juices, and beneath her load
The date-tree stooped, with reverential awe,
To man presenting all her golden gifts.
Through beds of lilies fluttered on the wing,
In giddy flight, the butterfly, and reeled
As drunk with perfume : more industrious toiled
The bee, and from the scented jasmine sipped
The liquid honey, from the bloomy spoils
Loading her basket thighs to build her hive,
Thoughtful of winter's cold, example bright
To sluggards of the use of time and thrift :
While perched upon a fig-tree's bough, with cups
Drooping, with syrup brimmed, hid from the sight
By the dark verdure, tuned the nightingale
Melodious numbers, till the silent Noon,
Bridling the winds to listen, from his car
High in the zenith bending, looked and smiled.
Darius viewed the lovely scene around,
The palm-tree groves, the citron vales, the woods
Of dusky cedars, gloom as thick as night

Shedding from off their branches, glades where dropped
Balsamic gums, or manna oozed, or wept
Incense in tears, the meads that mimicked skies,
Bright with a firmament of sparkling flowers,
The parks where grazed the buffalo, and far
Looming in distance, the cerulean hills,
Where flew the swift gazelle on hoofs of fear,
Or skipped from crag to crag the antelope,
Or where the wild goat on the eagle's nest
Pryed, rash intruder !

“ These are all my own,”
Exclaimed the king, “ far as the eye can stretch,
Almost as far as fancy can extend
Her magnifying vision, all is mine ;
Have I not then enough to make me blest ?
Some men desire to heap because they see
Others have more, and not because they can
Make use of what they have already got.
O they were poor, though Cobi's golden sands
Were their's ! for something more to be desired,
Yet unobtained, they 'd covet, still in want,
And still but beggars, since who is in want
Is but a beggar. Envy keeps them poor ;
The spite that others fatten makes them starve ;
Rather than joy in that their neighbour thrives,
They 'd suffer, if their pain could ruin bring ;
This is a spirit worthy of the damned,
The fiends are such. But I who glorious stand
Above all rivals in my wealth and power,
O what have I to envy or desire ?”
The monarch ended, and a pause ensued,
The courtiers, dubious of their master's thoughts,
Feared to express their own. Atossa then,

Imperious dame, one of the despot's wives,
And elder sister of Artystone,
But no more like her sister than a gem
Is like the sylvan flower, (the one the eye
May dazzle with its sheen, but overpowers
The vision gazing; while the other woos
The heart to look, to love, and to admire;)
Thus to her lord in pompous speech replied :
" My lord ! thou hast to envy and desire
Much still remaining. Greece is not thine own.
Thou 'st added nothing to the wide domains
My father conquered, and my brother gained ;
To be the king of Persia then was thought
To extend the Persian empire. Much to thee
They left; then much from thee is surely due.
Thou 'st promised me Athenian slaves to spin
My silken tissues, damsels to prepare
My festive garlands, and to drive my steeds
Laconian youths. I wait, and still may wait,
Fulfilment of thy pledge, if here in ease
Thou rest inactive. If to glory's voice
Deaf, and if blind to Persia's sovereign weal,
Thou art content, nor seekst increase of power,
Sufficed with that abundance which thou owest
To others arms, not to thine own, reflect,
That though thou hast to envy and desire
Nothing, yet thou hast every thing to lose.
A king must fear inspire if he would rule ;
And if he 'd keep his own dominions free
From foes, he must his enemies attack,
Or else his sloth will enemies invite
To invade his own. Thus thou hast all to fear,
If thou hast nought to envy and desire."
" Sayst thou then so?" returned the monarch, flushed

With indignation ; but remembering how
Pride gnawed her heart, and like a cancer fed
On every gentle virtue that should grace
Woman, and most a queen, his anger calmed,
And smiling, added, " Must a monarch reign
By fear alone ?"

Atossa was rebuked :

Expecting anger, she received but love,
And was ashamed to speak. Let man deceive
Ever his spouse by treatment such as this ;
'T will silence best the tongue that 's always prompt
To cavil and to murmur. Then arose
Viasa, famous poet from the clime
Of Hindostan. Born on the Ganges' banks,
Death had his parents from his infant arms
Dragged, and him hurled as some vile useless thing,
Too mean a spoil to plunder ; yet, what Death
Had spared in mercy, his paternal wealth
More cruel relatives and strangers seized.
His childhood was unhappy ; but still more
His youth, for then to all his other ills
Sickness was added. When to manhood grown,
His fallen state, with fierce ambition fired,
He strove to elevate ; and Fortune seemed
To smile upon him, and to offer back
His stolen treasures, by his toil redeemed
From her hard tenure ; but her golden hook
He caught too eager, nor perceived the Worm
Of Ruin was the bait with which she fished :
Cruel, relentless Deity, she brought
False Pride to shame his poverty, and Despair
To wrack his hopes ; but Pity flew to Heaven,
Beneficent, and wiled the Angel down

Of Genius, who the demons drove away,
And thus addressed him : “ Why thine aim on wealth
Set, that will die and perish when thou 'rt dead ?
Lo ! wisdom I have brought, and give to thee ;
And with it virtue, if thou wilt consent
To abandon riches, which but fetters fix
On souls exalted. Thou mayst be despised,
Hated, reviled while living, yet shalt be
Revered in death ; and on the earth thy fame
Shall be immortal.” This the seraph said,
Smiling serene, and with her gracious looks
Dispersed the storm that lowered about his heart.
From that hour altered, Avarice never more
A tempest raised ; but Peace, the halcyon bird,
Sat, brooding calms for ever at his breast.
Henceforth, though poor, yet ne'er was he in want ;
For he toiled hard, that he might never stoop
To beg or sue, humility that 's worse
Than death to minds susceptible : his sole
Fault was, he never could forgive affronts,
Nor pardon injuries : his tender frame
Felt deeply ; and the wrong that 's deeply felt
Is late forgot : so sensitively keen
His nerves would tingle, quiver, vibrate, shake
At each emotion : joy in him was bliss ;
Bliss became pain from its excess of joy :
His heart resembled the Æolian harp
Responding to the zephyr's lightest touch
As truly as when fingered by the hand
Of the rude blast. Invited by the king
Of Persia, he had left his native land,
And served Darius, who of sages made
His friends, not slaves ; who patronised the arts,
And wisdom held in honour and esteem :

Not like the monarchs who now reign, who shower
On squeaking trebles, and on straddling jigs,
Music in fits, and epileptic screams,
On shameless nudity, and tricks obscene,
On foreign antics, not on native wit,
The gold that 's squeezed from labour, hungry, lean,
And ghastly, cursing loud the regal spleen
That keeps him ragged to adorn a quean.
To the king's interrogatory, thus
Answered the poet.

“ Not by fear, but love
Must monarchs rule, if they would reign secure.
Kings are a sort of gods upon the earth,
To whom the attribute of power is given,
Of justice and of mercy. Though so high
Exalted above other men, their rank
Should not encourage them to harshly use
Their subjects. Thunder is but seldom heard ;
But the sun glorious shines on every day.^{1*}
A thousand acts of goodness in the God
Of Heaven we see for one of vengeance seen.
Let kings of men then strive to imitate
The King of kings, remembering that though death
Be in their power, life they can never give ;
They may command a rebel to be killed,
A felon in a hundred pieces cut ;
But there their proud dominion ends ; nor might
Nor majesty can call life back again.
Of anger then beware, revenge, and hate,
Of sudden judgments, and remorse too late :
These are the sins of kings. My gracious lord !
Your life 's a book, and every day you reign
A page is added ; write not on the leaves

What you would have erased ; posterity
Will read the volume, and will judge the work
Correctly, and admire it, or condemn !”¹⁷
To whom Darius. “Thou hast spoken well ;
But dost thou know of kings who thus have reigned ?”
“Few, truly,” said the poet, “they are rare ;
Therefore the worthier he who can attain
To such distinction ; few the planets are
Among the stars that glimmer in the sky ;
Few are the jewels midst the stones of earth ;
Yet such a king was Pischdad, Gemshid such,
Till pride usurped his reason.”

“Tell me, then,
Returned Darius, “what these monarchs did,
What in their deeds was worthy of renown ?”
“I will relate, my lord ! how a bad prince
Fell from his throne ; the lesson may instruct
With equal force a virtuous monarch how
To reign secure, firm seated in the hearts
Of loyal subjects, loved, esteemed, adored.”
His lyre then tuning, with a master’s hand
Viasa struck the chords, and thus began.
“In the primeval ages when these realms
Thou rulest now with wisdom Zoak held
By right of conquest, Persia was a waste ;
Crime, with disheveled hair, and bloodshot eye,
And murderous hand, stalked through the land ; the voice
Of Lamentation, shrieking like a ghost,
Was nightly heard ; and Desolation wailed
With curses all the ruin she had made :
For by the sword he governed, as he ’d gained
His sceptre by the sword. Skilled in the arts
Of magic, which from demons he had learned,
He made his power more dreaded : still that was

Less dreaded than his person, shrunken, pale,
Haggard, and ghastly,—eyes that wildly flashed
As baleful meteors, lips that turned awry,
Twisted by rage, that curdled all the blood
Within them purple, like the livid blotch
Of plague or leprosy, and a huge hump
Distorting all his spine,—a monster fierce,
Implacable, and cruel : striking awe,
Terror, and horror into every heart.
After some years, 't is said that Ahriman,
Who had obeyed him, and had laboured hard .
For his advancement, claimed as his reward,
A kiss. 'T was little that the devil asked,
So thought the tyrant, yielding to his wish :
Whereon the devil with his lips on fire,
With sulphur blazing hot from hell, applied
His mouth, and on each shoulder raised a sore
Where serpents crawled and burrowed. As these gnawed
Down to his bones, with pain intolerable
The wretched monarch writhed, while down his back
A foul corruption ran, the skin and flesh
Corroding as a blister. Long he pined,
And prayed that hell itself might be exchanged
For torments that the damned would shrink to bear.
At length the devil whispered in a dream,
A cure to ease his smart, fresh human blood
To wash the ulcers, and a paste composed
Of palpitating brains, torn from the skull,
Still warm, to feed the serpents. First were killed
The criminals, but when all these were slain,
The innocent were taken for this use :
Then blood of sheep and bullocks' brains were tried
To cheat the monster, but with no avail :
Nothing but what was human could relieve

His tortures. 'Mongst the victims put to death
 Were the three sons of Gou, a smith by trade,
 Who, driven crazy at the horrid deed,
 Ran furious through the streets ; and holding up
 His leathern apron for a standard, called
 Loudly for justice, loud for vengeance called,
 So that the people gathered from all parts
 Around him, till they grew an army vast,
 And stormed the palace. Him they sought they found,
 But slew not, for death mercy would have been ;
 But him reserved for punishment more just,
 More fit requital for his crimes so black.
 Within a cave they thrust him, with a chain
 Fixed to his den, and all access blocked up,
 To be by his own in-bred snakes devoured,
 Which gnawed him piecemeal, till his dreadful cries
 Rocked the high mountains overhead, and hurled
 The forests in the air, that on their tops
 Had grown coeval with the birth of Time :
 And when he died, an earthquake rent the ground
 Beneath him, that to hell's abyss his soul
 Fell, where it still consumes in quenchless fire."

Roused at the tale, his courage all ablaze,
 Ignited by the poet's words, upsprang
 Darius to his feet, and thus exclaimed :—
 " Bring me that leathern apron ! I will sow
 That ancient badge of valour with a crop
 Of pearls and jewels, thick as when the corn
 Is scattered in a new-ploughed field in spring.
 By Heaven ! shall a common blacksmith dare
 Resent his injuries with sword in hand,
 And I, Darius, king of kings, from fear
 Of dreams and visions, sit ignobly here,

And let vile slaves affront me? Let me shake
For ever, fooled by shadows: let the Greeks
Spit on my beard, insult me with their gibes,
And laugh to scorn my power, if I bear
My wrongs a moment longer. Patience long
Abused will turn to fury; and the hate
That's pent up long, with long restraint endured,
Will burst to madness when at last it bursts."
The apron here was brought, and to the king
Presented. With a smile of pride that loomed
Indignant wrath, receiving it, he spoke:—
"This leathern apron shall our banner be"
For ever. Vengeance to the battle field
Shall carry it; there Courage lift it high,
Invincible, and from the combat back
Shall Victory triumphant bear it home.
This with the king resides in war and peace,
And never leaves him—the empire's surest pledge
Of safety. If rebellion raise her head,
'T will quail the monster: in the thick of fight
Scatter our foes as sand along the beach,
Flapped by the whirlwind's wing. The serried ranks
Of shields it charges: hark the clashing din!
Spears break before it, blunted, shattered, snapped,
And arrows wither into clouds of dust—
The field is ours! This was no airy dream.
But a presentiment of our success
When vengeance buckles on our arms. I'll wait
No longer; but this moment quit the debt
I've owed so long. Mardonius, take thou then
A hundred thousand warriors, and invade
The Grecian states, and to our power reduce
By force the obstinate who dare resist:
Eretria level to the ground, and bring

The Athenians captive, bound in chains, to serve
Our women as their menial slaves. Meanwhile,
Let heralds from each province, in our name
Water and earth demand. They who our sway
Shall own, will meet with clemency ; the rest
I here devote to slaughter and to death."

A dozen heralds were at once despatched,
And duly arrived in Greece, from different states
Receiving earth and water, then the pledge
Deemed of submission to superior power.
Most all the continent agreed to pay
The vassal tribute, and of all the isles
Not one refused. Athens and Sparta as yet
Had not been visited ; and thither were
Four of the heralds, chosen out by lot,
Sent, to each city two. At Athens now
Had Hamet and his grandson, Tuath, come ;
The grandsire tottering on the steps of age,
Trailing his staff of office, by the youth,
A stouter staff, supported. Thus the oak,
Clothed with a sheet of moss, its boughs and trunk
Of verdure stript, when by the mountain blast
Struck, though it shakes and staggers in the gale,
Yet falls not, by the ivy's branches held
Erect and firm ; thus held, it scorns the blast.
Before the senate, in the market place
Assembled, now for daily business closed,
The shops of jewellers and barbers shut,
Arrived the heralds, by a pressing crowd
Surrounded, who from labour and their homes
Had run to hear the news. The city guard,
Composed of Seythians, order kept, and drove
Aside the throng too eager, held with pain

From pushing forwards. First a priest advanced,
And slew the victim superstition thought
A grateful offering to the cruel gods,
Pleased with the smell of blood; with which besmeared,
The place was sanctified,—or reckoned so,
The same to unenlightened bigot minds;
But to the wise the spot is rather cursed,
By pain and death polluted. Strange it is,
What devils damned will men become and make
The gracious gods: they but religion mock,
And worship turn to orgies hell would scorn.
Then with uplifted hand, that trembling held
His sceptre, thus the elder herald spoke:—
“The king of Medes and Persians, whom the East
Acknowledges lord paramount of earth,
Hath sent us, his ambassadors, to claim
The realm of Attica, which, if ye yield,
His clemency consents ye still may keep,
On payment of a tribute. This he grants;
Forgiving you the injury ye did
When ye invaded Lydia, and attacked
Sardis, and burned its temple. Say, if ye
Will render us the earth and water deemed
The token of subjection to his will?
If ye refuse, I, on his part, declare
Immediate war against ye, and announce
His purpose fixed—unalterably fixed—
With sword and fire to overrun this land,
Till not a house nor habitant be left,—
All doomed to ruin to appease his wrath,
For he's implacable when contravened.”
While Hamet still was speaking, shouts and yells
Oft stopped his speech, to freemen's ears too harsh
To hear with patience; now when ended, burst

A roar of indignation, from all sides
So loud, the welkin rung, and distant hills
Resounded back the cries; for dreadful is
The populace excited: not so fierce
The lion or the tiger in their rage
As is a mob, more cruel monster far
Than all the brutes. But calm was soon restored
When rose Miltiades, with sullen joy
Eyeing the multitude, since he had much
To fear from Persian ire, and to revenge
Still more: in former times 't was he who gave
Counsel to break the bridge across the Danube,
And leave Darius to his Scythian foes;
And lately he had lost the Chersonese,
His patrimonial state, by Persian arms
Expelled from thence. Majestic now he looked,
Like some proud god, hiding all signs of fear,
And masking even hate and wrath, a task
Hard to perform; yet on his rigid lip
There smiled a demon, and from out his eyes
There shot a glance, bright as the lightning flash
That darts to kindle clouds and fire the storm.
With arms infolded in his mantle, thus
Addressed Miltiades the excited crowd:—
“The heralds to the rocks, Athenians, where
The kites and ravens wait them. There they'll find
The tokens that they seek: thence let them take
To him who sent them our submission. This
Our answer should be, will be, if ye feel
Ye are not slaves already: and methinks,
I read your looks aright, ye still are free.”

A wild uproar, like whirlwinds when unchained,
Rushing from out a mountain cave to tear

The forests by the roots, now rent the air ;
And the infuriate crowd pressed on to seize
The heralds. Aristides swift advanced
Them to protect, and by his manner awed
The mob a moment, by his mien august,
Serene, and calm, deterred from doing harm ;
For virtue is a power the base will fear
Instinctively : it bids, and they obey,
Nor question wherefore, by some charm impelled.
But now old Hamet, fixing his regard
Full on Miltiades, by dread of death
Denounced against him undeterred, replied :—
“ Respect unto my office I demand :
A herald has been always sacred deemed
By hordes most barbarous : the privilege
Accorded by the savages, I claim
To freely speak my errand. This deny ;
And I devote ye to the wrath of Heaven
Offended, that shall hurl upon your heads
All curses. As for thee, who set these dogs
To bark, and bite my heels, I shake my robe
Against thee, and the gods whom thou dost serve,
Pray, that they thus, to punish thee, may shake
Their anger, and with some envenomed plague
Smite thy foul carcass, till, thy pride abashed,
And cruelty rebuked, thou rot and die.”
“ O father ! ” Tuath cried, then catching hold
Of Hamet’s lifted hand : “ Forbear to curse !
Thy prayer is impotent for harm, and thee
Will work no good, but ill for ill retort.
O beg their clemency, that we may go
Hence, unmolested, for their rage I fear ! ”
To whom the elder, smiling on the youth.
“ Fear nothing. child ! they dare not touch a hair,

Nor rudely pluck from off thy face one smile,
But Heaven will mark it, and with tears exact
The penance. 'T is the manner of all curs
To snarl and bark; the hound alone will bite —
And yet perhaps the taunts and hoots I hear
Forebode some evil. If then we must die,
As well to-day as at another time
Some few years hence, that for so little space
From death removes us: life to me's no boon,
Who near am dead already; they'll but spare
A few months' sufferings: but for thee my heart
Yearns, and would have thee live in spite of sense
That tells me better: 't is most to be blest
Early to die; whom the gods hate, live long:
Death is no demon, nor is yet a ghost,
To torture or affright, but angel sent
From Heaven to liberate from bonds of clay
The soul, and lead it up to Paradise:
To die is easy as to have been born;
No greater pain 't will be to draw the last
Breath than the first that ever infant gasped."

As when a tempest, that has restless tost
The billows 'gainst a noble frigate's side,
Strained with the blows, at last collects its might,
And with one huge, tremendous wave strikes down
The bulwarks, sweeping from the reeling deck
The spars, and masts, and seamen to the gulf
Below, where hissing, like an angry snake,
Death opes his wide insatiate maw to snatch
His luckless prey: so now the furious crowd,
Restrained by Aristides and the guard
With pain, all obstacles bore down with one
Resistless push, and in their arms caught up

The heralds, lifting them up in the air,
Sheer from their feet, and dragged them with a force
Impetuous to the fatal rock, midst jeers,
Hisses, and laughter, and a boisterous mirth,
Too cruel to be gay, born of the heart
When hardest, monster by Revenge begot
On Pride and Hate. Hamet was almost torn
In pieces by the ruffians, yet he scorned
Further to vent reproach, but meekly met
His fate with patience. As his snowy locks
Streamed in the blast, and flapped his tattered garb,
Rent into thousand shreds, he seemed no more
A living man that 's conscious of the scene
Around him, but a spirit on whom death
Could do no further harm. But Tuath shrunk
With horror from destruction. Pity eyed
The youth, and struck him mad, else in that hour
A whole eternity of deaths he'd felt,
Each worse than death. Now at the brink arrived,
Down the abyss they flung them. 'Gainst the crags
Jutting below, the bodies with a crash
Fell and rebounded, spattering on the rocks
Blood, brains, and quivering fragments, while in air
Above the precipice, the ravenous birds
Screamed and rejoiced, in giddy circles wheeled
Their aërial flight, as dancing in their joy,
Then darted downwards straight to whet their beaks,
On human flesh, still warm, to glut and gorge.

Meanwhile, the heralds that had been despatched
To Sparta, by the ephori received
In public audience, were by them condemned
To death likewise, and into wells were flung.
Hence, an affront inexpiable was thus

Offered the Persian monarch by the two
Most formidable states of Greece, both stung
And maddened by the anguish of their wrongs,—
For man is injured when his freedom 's wronged :
And hence resentment mutual lit the war.


Already at Cilicia had arrived
Mardonius, and embarked on board-o'-ship,
With a large fleet placed under his command ;
While the land force was ordered to march on
Towards the Hellespont. These having joined,
He ferried them across the narrow strait,
And landed them in Thrace. While onwards moved
His army, and subdued the northern parts
Of Macedonia, to the golden isle ¹⁹
Of Thasos he proceeded with his fleet,
And, unresisted, took it. Thence he steered
Towards Acanthus, and along the shore
Of the Strymonic gulf coasted long time,
Beating against the wind to reach the point
Of Acrathos ; when sudden veered the breeze,
Now blowing from the north, and filled their sails :
With joy elate, they hope soon to attain
The dreaded promontory : swiftly they pass
The headlands, and along the verdant meads
Skirting the beach, behold the fleecy flocks,
So near, their bleating is distinctly heard ;
They even smell the perfume of the pine
And oleander, from the neighbouring groves
Borne by the gale : well pleased, they think their toil
Is ended, and their dreary watchings past.
Mount Athos is in sight ; but capped with clouds,
An inauspicious portent. There in state
Sat Boreas on his gloomy throne, the king

Of tempests, with a sulphurous meteor crowned,
Girt with a robe of mist, purfled with hail,
And grained with lightning, grasping in his hand
A link of thunderbolts, while at his feet,
Growling and snarling, lay the monster Storm,
Held in a chain. Eurus and Notus stand
Beside him, and respectful heed his nod,
When to unloose the ministers of wrath,
Or when to bind them : to whom Boreas thus.
" Shall we unscathed suffer this heathen fleet
To pass our realms, who never offer prayers
To appease our power, who scorn to build us shrines,
And us refuse to recognise as gods,
That they may ravage with the fire and sword
The native land of Orithyia, whence
I stole her, trembling, blushing in my arms,
To grace my couch? No, let us bend the pride
That will not stoop to fear us ; let us blast
The sceptics who our deity deny,
And to our hate and anger immolate
Who will not sacrifice to gain our love.
Strike off the fetters, wake the monsters up
That in their dens lie sleeping, with your darts
Prick, goad, and sting them till to fury chafed,
And madness fired, then let them howling forth."
He spoke, and was obeyed. From every part
The winds let loose, with flapping pinions strike
The vapours, gathered on the mountain's brow,
And drive them coiling, twisting inside out,
Folds within folds involved, their tortuous spires
Contracting, then dilating, serpent-like,
Flying in hideous rout. To fire their speed
The lightnings dart, and horrid thunders roar,
Urging their flanks. The dreadful ruin swift

Bears for the fleet, already by the surge
Disordered, lashing now the reeling prow,
Now smiting hard the stern, anon the side
Crashing with blows that many a gaping rent
Tore in the beams, in which the billows rushed,
And filled the vessel, till within the gulf,
Boiling around, it sunk. Firm in its clutch
The whirlwind grasps the sails, and spars, and masts,
And scatters them about in angry sport,
Then strains with all its might to dash the hulks
Against the rocks: they strike, and lo! a scream
From human voices in despair the din
Drowns even of the storm. The sea, and sky,
And earth are wrapped in darkness, save the flames
That issue from Mount Athos' top, which seems
At times a furnace blazing, or the sun
At mid-day shining, with a sheen too bright
For eyes to gaze on; then it scarcely looms
Through the thick clouds: green, yellow, purple, black
Changing by turns, and from its livid face
Frowns awful terrors. By the tempest hurled
Against the cliffs precipitous, were lost
Three hundred ships, and twenty thousand men
Perished, some drowned, some dashed against the strand,
Killed by the shock, but more devoured by sharks:
Many of those who on the shore were washed,
Chilled by the cold, and stiffened by the frost,
Died in a slumber, dreaming of their homes
Far off, 'midst palm tree groves in sunny lands.
With what escaped, Mardonius on the beach
Encamped, where he was by the army joined
A few days hence; and many days were passed
In saving from the waves the floating wrecks,
Refitting and repairing vessels hurt,

Tending the sick and maimed, and giving rest
To the whole squadron to recruit their strength.

While thus employed, within the neighbouring woods
The Brygi held a council, to decide
Whether they should the Persian camp attack
And plunder, or allow them through their land
To traverse unmolested. Clothed in skins
Of savage beasts, in furs, or woolly fleece,
Or hairy hides of oxen, or in robes
Of hempen tissue spun, the elders sat
Beneath the spreading branches of an oak,
Around an altar, formed of unhewn stones,
Raised in a pile and flattened on the top.
Then taking willow twigs, in bundles tied,
They placed them separately on the grass,
Each lot unloosing ; or with lime tree leaves,
Split into portions, round their fingers twined,
Divined the future,—what they had to hope,
Or what to fear. Propitious were the signs.
A prisoner then was led, secured by cords
Lashed round his arms and body, and a chain
Fixed to his feet, a hostile warrior seized
In battle, when by numerous wounds and loss
Of blood he fell exhausted ; still he looked
Pale and exsanguine, yet his haughty brow
Disdained to acknowledge weakness : though with pain
Still smarting from his wounds, still green and fresh,
His scornful lips compressed it ; and his eye
Anger implacable and hatred shot,
Fierce as the lightning, every glance a flash
To strike a foe around. This captive was
A Saxon chief, one of the ancestors °°
Of Britain, thy inhabitants, still famed



For resolution, fortitude, and pride.
Firm he advanced, clad in a horrid vest
Of human scalps, flayed reeking from the skulls
Of hundred enemies, slain by his arm,
Together sewed and patched : furious he glared,
Wild as the bull before the horny fight,
As stately in his stature, wilder far
Than e'en the tattooed savages who held
Him unresisting in their sinewy grasp,
Him fearing still, though bound. An earthen vase
Was brought, and on a signal made, they flung
The captive on the ground, and fixed his head
Over the vessel, tugging at his locks.
Serene, composed, the sullen warrior bore
Their taunts with magnanimity. On his head
They poured some ale, libation to their god,
Pleistorus, better pleased with human blood
Than blood of sheep and horses. Now the priest
Sharpens his knife upon a whetstone ; shrill
And grating struck the sound, last sound he 'd hear,
Upon the victim's ear ; an icy chill
Thrilled through his marrow, deep his breath was drawn,
But ere it filled again, the fatal knife
Had pierced his throat, and through the flesh and veins
Cut with a gash tremendous, whence a stream
Of purple gore, gurgling and hissing, gushed,
And with it ebbed the life : but to the clouds
His spirit borne, fled to the barren steppes
Of Scythia, and his former home still haunts
In winter storms, there frightening in the night
The Tartar shepherd, and denouncing war,
Exterminating war, 'mongst thousand tribes.
Close to the shoulder, from the quivering trunk
They lopped the right arm, and high in the air

Pitched it, and its gyrations marked as down
It spinning fell, there leaving it to rot.
Then in the vase they dipped their arrows, spears,
Hatchets, and swords, and with the blood besmeared
A rusty cimeter, Pleistorus thought,
Fixed on the altar, whom they thus adored ;
Fit emblem for a deity so vile,
Appropriate worship to their demon god.
Next on the pile of stones they threw a heap
Of faggots, and applied consuming fire,
In which they burned the body. Then in cups
Of human skulls, some plaited and adorned
With gold, with leather simply others capped,
They quaffed a beverage of honey brewed
With hemp, fermented ; potent to the nerves,
Firing the blood. Now all with rattling tongues
Speak simultaneous, better pleased to hear
Their own than listen to their neighbour's voice ;
And high the tumult swelled with gestures fierce
As they discussed the war. It was resolved
To arm at once : and as the evening star
Then peeped above the sombre mountain's top,
Leading the silent Eve, with modest veil
Hiding her gentle charms, the squadrons formed,
Uncouth barbarians, to the sound of horns
And kettle drums, that beat a loud alarm.
With shouts and wild acclaim they forward marched,
Disordered in their ranks, at every step
Startling the screeching owl from out her nest
In some old elm that, by the thunder struck,
Looked like a giant spectre in the light
Shed by the rising moon ; while from the grass,
Scared by their tread, a cloud of fireflies winged
Their aerial flight, trailing their twinkling lamps,

That seemed a shower of shooting stars : but when
Near to the camp arrived, they closed their lines,
And trod with caution, silence on their lips
Imposing, -- task now harder from the drink
They 'd swilled ; for drink intoxicating oils
The hinges of the tongue, and opes the heart ;
So that some drunken, swaggering cries were borne
On the night wind, and on the drowsy ear
Struck of some sleeping sentinel, who waked,
Trembling with fright. Thus, on the moss-grown rock
Reposing, wakes the shepherd at the blast
That tells of winter's coming, moaning shrill
And dismal ; quick he starts, aghast with fear,
And fancies that he 's heard the ominous shriek
Of some malignant ghost. Down the descent,
Now that they view the tents upon the shore,
The Brygi rushed, before the troops were armed,
Though by the sentinels aroused, yet plunged
In dozing stupor still, or else alarmed
Too much to know what now had best be done.
Through them disordered charged the savages
In one long line, that, like a ploughshare, cut
A horrid ridge of slaughter through the ranks.
The Persians yield and fly, their arms and clothes
Abandoning, a precious booty borne
In triumph home by the victorious foe,
Who many a tent, before they left the camp,
Fired. By this night attack many were killed
And wounded ; 'mongst the last Mardonius, who,
In rallying the fugitives, and them
Leading against the enemy, received
From a stout warrior a tremendous blow
That grazed his hip, inflicted by an axe ;
Not unrevenged, however, for his spear,

Uplifted at that moment, at the breast
Of his huge adversary levelled, him
Right through the heart transfixed, laid howling low.

A still more ample satisfaction took
Mardonius on the Brygi. In the course
Of some few days after this night affray
He marshalled all his force, and them in turn
Invaded, overrunning all their lands,
Seizing their flocks and herds, burning their farms,
And them reducing into bondage dire.
But having at Mount Athos by the storm
Suffered too much, he was obliged to lead
His army back to Persia. Athens thus,
And thus Eretria, for this time escaped
Impending ruin from his vengeful arm.


BOOK III.

AT midnight, in the grove of cedars, VIASA and IOLANTE, the daughter of DARIUS, meet, discovered however by that monarch, who is at first highly incensed against the lovers, but afterwards becomes reconciled to them. The war is again carried on against Greece; and DATTIS and ARTAPHERNES, accompanied by HIPPIAS and VIASA, are put in charge of a very considerable armament. They take Naxos, visit Delos, and after a little resistance seize on Eretria, reducing their prisoners to a state of servitude. While at the latter place HIPPIAS dreams an extraordinary dream, which he interprets favourably to his interests.

ABOVE the poplars in the garden shone
The new moon with her crescent horns, and tipped
With silver light the foliage; fitful flashed
The tremulous effulgence on the rills
And fountains gushing, lulling with the sound
Of falling spray the drowsy winds asleep.
The flowers drooped lifeless, drowned in floods of dew,
Or drugged to death with odours; and the air,
Lately expired, in sweetness was embalmed.
As seemed this earth to vanish from the view
Of Contemplation, other worlds appeared,
And other spectacles, more glorious far
Than noon-day splendours, hid from vulgar sight,
And unimaginable to vulgar minds,
But to the poet, tranced in rapture, shewn.

Hush! 't is the Angels that from Heaven descend
To visit mortals. Some the golden gates
Open of Paradise : what now the sheen
Of lustrous suns, or what the charms of earth
In spring time, to the wondrous scene on high,
Ineffably transcendent to describe :
Some sit on star-beams, clothed with snowy clouds,
Singing to wandering comets, and direct
Where in the vast profound to wing their flight
Through myriad orbs ; while others dreams distil
From vapours, and from darkness sleep extract.
Beneficent above the rest, repair
The guardian Spirits to the heart with dole
And sorrow stricken, and the balm of Hope,
By Mercy, the Physician of the soul,
Sent to the sick, pour in the wounds of Care ;
Blest task ! that's often by the babe performed,
New snatched from life, to cheer his mother sad,
And ease her troubles, robbed of all her joy.

'T was near on midnight : and Viasa walked
The cedar alleys, fired with flames of love,
And musing on ecstatic thoughts. That morn
He had been blest ; for Iolante had smiled,
Daughter of Parmis, of the royal line
Of Cyrus, who Darius had espoused,
Their dearest child. Long had Viasa loved
The maid in secret, almost in despair ;
And she in pining sorrow sighed to find
His lips refused to tell the silent care
She read upon his eyes. Love is not blind,
In spite of proverbs : but the blind, in love,
Will see sometimes, nor miracles require
To see as clearly as with orbs of light :



The ear becomes the eye, and feeling views
Each look, each gesture, every tone of voice,
All that the heart would say, if it could speak
Its raptures. She would listening hang, and drink
His every word whene'er he sung of love ;
When with averted face, for fear the theme
Might give offence, his voice would fall and drop
Tremulous and faint, her sighs would echo back
An answer to his song. She had that morn,
By others unperceived, a posy dropped,
Love's language in the east. He'd picked it up,
And read with transport what the flowers expressed,
For thus they spoke. " Within the cedar grove,
Whose dusky branches shed the gloom of death,
Meet me to-night, when to the rising moon
The bulbul sings, and charms her with his song." *1

" 'T is nearly now an hour since o'er the hill
The moon arose ; what can detain my love ! "
Exclaimed Viasa, as he lightly trod
The sombre path beneath the cedar's shade.
" Go swift, ye angels ! at her window peep,
And wake her ; whisper that the stars attend
Her coming, blinking with expected joy ;
The flowers are weeping at her long delay :
Why comes she not ? But hush ! I hear a sound—
'T is the night wind from slumber just aroused,
Stealing abroad on downy wings to rob
From opening buds their odours. How my heart
Flutters between delight and fear ! Methinks
It were too great a bliss within my arms
To fold her. Now to die were ecstasy
Since that I know she loves me : 't is enough
Thus to be loved, to wish no other joy :

More would excite the envy of the gods,
Who then might snatch her from me: p'rhaps more kind,
They keep her back in pity. List! it strikes
My ear again. It is the rising breeze
That stirs the foliage of the cedar boughs,
Sighing a plaintive murmur: dismal 't is,
As if a spirit, in the air inrolled,
Moaned piteous for some crime left unatoned —
No, no, 't is she! my love—my life—my soul!"

He ceased: for then his lips could speak no more,
By the excess of joy struck dumb; for bliss,
When exquisite, approaches anguish close
Till one is either, and the sense and soul
Palsies as much as when the nerves are shook
By torture or disease. Now sighs expressed
What words could never utter; and their hearts,
Tingling and throbbing, like electric wires
That carry messages, communion held,
And interchanged the language of their thoughts
More sweetly than the sweetest speech, though tongued
By seraphs when they warble to their harps
A rhapsody on love. Her face suffused
With blushes, she concealed beneath her locks
Of raven hue, that clustering down her neck
And heaving bosom, fell in wanton folds,
Like tendrils of the passion-flower, that twine
Around magnolias in the scented groves
Of Alabama: oft beneath the shade
Her eyes peered out, upturned to steal a glance,
Half timid and alarmed. Thus when the sun,
Rising with early beams, foresees a storm,
Behind the sable clouds he hides, while stars,
His light withdrawn, between the fleecy mists

Peep to discover what delays the dawn.
Thus hung she trembling in his arms, that clasped
Her yielding form as fiercely as if death
He grappled with in mortal agony ;
For love is furious and as wild as death
When passion 's fervent and the blood is warm.
At length shame loosed the tendons of his tongue,
No longer paralysed, but palsied still
In utterance half choaked, as thus he sighed.

“ O this felicity exceeds the power
Of words to name it ! Fate may do her worst :
She cannot from me the remembrance take .
Of this delight ecstatic. Dear's the sight
To the fond mother of her new born joy :
Dear to the hoary sire his only son
Returned triumphant from the field of fame :
But dearer still, dearer than all besides,
Is early love, the first and only love
Of youth : it stands alone within the heart,
As the all cheerful sun in heaven, whose light
Pales and bedims the ineffectual stars,
Smiles darkness from the skies, and every cloud
Tinges with golden hues, so dazzling bright
That Paradise with all its glories seems
To ope before the eyelids of the Morn.
Hence shall this hour be always in my sight,
And thy dear image, although absent, beam
Before my vision : memory supplies
Lovers with eyes ; though parted, present still
For ever. ”

“ Sayest thou so,” replied the maid,
Faltering in speech, as harp-string echoing still
A trembling cadence when the sonnet 's sung,

That 's touched the heart with melody and love :
" Then I am happy too : and I shall see
Thee also in my thoughts ; yet often wish
The greater bliss, thus to behold thee, thus
To listen to thy voice, more sweet to me
Than Zephyr's whisper to the opening Bud
Shrinking from frosty dew, that tells he 's seen
The glistening sunshine on the mountain top,
Which soon will come with life-restoring warmth."
To whom Viasa answer thus returned :—
" To live without thee for a moment hence
Were living still to die a thousand deaths
Each day successive. When I saw thee first,
I loved with silent wonder : who can charms
Like thine behold, and not admire ! The blind,
Restored to sight, when first upon the light
They gaze, are less bewildered, less surprised,
Than I was dazzled when I first perceived
Thee, like a lustrous star, before unknown
In heaven, when first it glitters in the sky :
The Magian from his watch-tower views the ray,
Struck with amazement, and alarm, and joy.
Yet, though I loved, I never breathed a word
To melt thy pity ; for I knew thy sire
Is proud, and might consume thee in his wrath.
I bear no titles to adorn my name,
Am but an humble stranger : had I then
Aspired so high as lift mine eyes to thee,
Like the bold eagle looking on the sun,
The lightning of his rage had struck me down.
The love which in my heart I thought I 'd locked,
My dearest treasure, thou hast found, and made
Thine own, and in return hast given me thine.
What thy sweet lips pronounced I cannot doubt :

I ask no other pledge: 't has made me blest,
So that I envy not the gods, who taste
Beatitude past earthly joys. But love
Has duties, as it has its tears and smiles.
Say, canst thou quit the luxury of pomp,
The courtly splendours that attend thy nod,
Thy silken tissues, and thy downy couch,
Without a murmur? Canst thou bear the scorn
Of poverty, cold, hunger, thirst support,
Nor then regret the ease thou 'st left behind?
If not, oh fly! while yet the power remains
Thou mayst in safety, fly, though in despair
Thou leav'st me. I would rather pains endure
For ever, tortures that the damned would fear,
Than thou shouldst suffer but a passing pang!"

To him discoursing thus, to every word
Listening attentive, while the trickling tear
Bedimmed her vision, and the straining orbs
Fixed full on his, on growing darkness gazed
In languor, Iolante answered thus:—

"Yes, I will quit all pageantry and show,
Gewgaws and tinsel to the soul that loves,
My robes and jewels doff, abandon rank,
Forego magnificence that brings no joy,
And clad me in the meanest garments worn
By peasant dames, bear hunger, thirst endure,
Support the cold, and in the noon-day sun
Toil like a slave, if thou art only by.
Yes, I will fly with thee, with thee will fly,
And leave the rest behind without a thought;
Thankful to heaven, that in exchange for all
Has given me one true heart, has given me thee."
"Then seal thy faith with one ecstatic kiss!"

Replied Viasa : " we must hence to-night —
This moment : here to linger, were to find
Destruction to our hopes, death to our joys :
We must not wait another hour ; delay
Would bring discovery, and all be lost.
Nay, tremble not ! If the night wind be cold,
Within my arms I 'll shelter thee. The sound
Thou fearst, that seemed the rustling of the leaves,
Was but the sigh of unrequited vows ;
We 've pledged them, dearest ! and the seal shall be
This mutual signet of our constant love."

He said : and on her lips impressed a kiss,
That seemed to grow there, rooting to her heart.
Embracing thus, and thus embraced, the bliss
Of Heaven descended, like a tropic shower
Fast dripping, on them, midst a storm of sighs
And broken gasps, each heave a thunderclap,
While vivid thoughts were lightnings set on fire
To blast and ruin. Their hearts had been destroyed,
As others have been often, had not then
A voice, less potent nathless than their sighs,
" Death and damnation !" cried, and then on high,
Less dreadful than their thoughts, a dagger gleamed
An instant, then against his shoulder blade.
Struck, slipping from the bone, Viasa, who
Fell staggering against a cedar's trunk,
Astonished more than hurt. Darius 't was,
Whom care had kept awake ; for news had reached
The palace that same day, that all his fleet
Had at Mount Athos been destroyed ; and Sleep,
That visits in his prison den the slave,
Unbinds his chain, and sets him free from pain,
Often forsakes the monarch, although wooed

And drugged to stay, the soft luxurious couch
Spurning to creep to sackcloth, gold and gems
And perfumes leaving for a filthy nest.
A truce to restless cares he hoped to find
In the calm air of night, and hence had sought
The sombre cedar grove, whose gloom attuned
Best with his thoughts. He had not there been long
Ere he discerned a female form, that stole,
Light as a shadow from a fleecy cloud,
Along the paths, oft looking to perceive
If any watched, and often starting back,
As if suspicious of the very wind,
So furtively she moved. He marked her steps,
And followed, undiscovered. When he found
The lady was his daughter, shame and rage
Possessed his soul, and armed his bloody hand
That struck the blow; while thus in wrath aloud
Exclaimed the indignant monarch, with a voice
Of thunder, as when tempests menace death:—
“Death and damnation! do my eyes behold
My daughter’s foul dishonour! Back to hell,
Thou tempter; back to hell, from whence thou camest!
Seduce the fiends there! but here no more
With jingling lute and song think to prevail
O’er tender damsels, with the whining tone
Of ditties caught, as crocodiles allure
With plaintive murmurs their unconscious prey!
Was it for this I called thee to my court—
Honoured thy talents—thee esteemed and loved
As my own brother! Die, ungrateful slave!”
The sudden blow had Iolante stunned
At first with stupor, and she felt her blood
Congealed to icicles: she tried to speak;
But fear nipped short her words before they left

Her frozen lips ; yet ere her father ceased
To vent reproaches, she had reassumed
Her courage, and the daring of her race,
And thus addressed him fuming still with rage :
“ ’T is I am guilty ! Let thy justice seek
My heart, if love must be atoned by blood.
Lo ! here I bare my bosom. Father ! strike,
And take the life thou gavst me : thou hast killed
Viasa innocent ; me, guilty, slay !
’T was I seduced him ; bade him meet me here ;
And here where we have plighted faith, I ’d die—
But soft, I hear him speak—he ’s living still—
O spare him, father ! No, thou shalt not strike—
My love is furious as thy wrath can be.”

With this, she threw herself upon his breast,
And fainted in his arms. Her he upheld,
And soothed and kissed her, in his swelling heart
Feeling parental fondness soon return.
Pity within his eyeballs formed a tear,
Which fell upon her cheek, and with it fell
All rancour. Startled by the gracious drops,
The damsel wakened from her swoon, and smiled,
Assured still further by this tender speech :—
“ Thou hast prevailed, my daughter : love has gained
A conquest over anger. In thy face
I see thy heart ; nor can my own refuse
The grace thy looks and speaking eyes demand.
Thou lov’st Viasa ; for that love I rue
My hasty blow ; and in requital give
Him thee, but only when in glorious arms
He ’s gained distinction. Persia’s monarch loves
The sage and poet ; they are not of earth,
But sprung from heaven ; and their voice is heard

In future times, when in their verse alone
The great and mighty, long since dead, revive
To live for ever : in their fame we find
Our own, and immortality : the king
Who to the muse is cruel or unjust,
Sinks as the nameless slave, extinct in dust." ²²
Then turning to Viasa—" Friend, I crave
Thy pardon. Rage, they say, is often blind ;
I trust, mine has been impotent to hurt.
But if thou 'rt wounded sorely, swift repair,
And seek the leech's art, who knows the power
Of stanching herbs."

To whom Viasa thus :—

" The cut is trifling, nor requires a balm
Other than thy kind words ; they 've healed and cured
The deeper wound inflicted by thy frown,
That, sharper than thy dagger, stabbed my heart.
If great the debt of gratitude I owed
To thee before, I now am doubly bound
By this new favour granted me, so much
Beyond my hopes. I am not skilled in war,
Yet it is not unknown to me. When young,
Scarce then a youth, I girded on my arms,
My country to defend, by Calmuck hordes
Invaded. They were driven back with loss
Of many thousand warriors : nor was I
Unnoticed, nor my virgin sword unmarked.
But though I 'd never wielded arms, methinks
That for the guerdon thou hast promised, I
Could laugh at danger, and could death defy."

On this, the monarch led his daughter's steps,
With joy now trembling, to the palace back ;
His arm around her waist, while in her hands

His other clasped, she pressed against her heart,
As if to say: "Feel how it throbs with bliss!"
Sweet thoughts, as innocent as angels' dreams,
Imagination with her magic wand
Called up in visions beatific. Hope
Around her bosom hovered as a dove
Flutters about above its downy nest:
Fair breast! suffused with blushes, ripening fast
For love's delight, like apples filled with sap,
Tinted by autumn's hot vermilion suns.
She moved as graceful as a plaintive song
Led by harmonious numbers; in her air,
As in a mirror, Elegance approved
Each gesture, Dignity approved each look,
And Admiration, gazing on her charms,
Suspended praise, in silent wonder rapt;
While Love, with heart too full to speak its bliss,
Whispered to Joy, and almost swooned in sighs.
In mute astonishment, Viasa strained
His eyes to fix on her retiring form
Till lost in shade, when lost, still strained to view;
And Fancy favoured the illusive wish,
For she seemed present: memory can see
The image loved, though absent, still in sight.

A short time after, with the remnant saved
Of his great armament, in their retreat
Through Thrace and Asia much reduced, arrived
Mardonius, downcast and disconsolate.
Darius was at first highly enraged,
And him upbraided bitterly; but soothed
To pity by the tears his daughter shed,
Fair Artozostra, to his son-in-law
Was reconciled at length, and back to grace

And favour him admitted. Still a youth
In years, Mardonius had not learned from time
Experience, nor was naturally formed
For prudence or discretion : and the rank
He held from favour, not from merit, him
Corrupted, aggravating all his faults :
Of hasty temper, and imperious will,
Proud, arrogant, presumptuous, oft his pride
Occasioned sad disasters, scarce redeemed
By daring valour and impetuous zeal,
His only virtues. Yet he was beloved
By Artozotra, who upon the youth
Doated with fondness, almost to a fault ;
For he was gay and sprightly, made to win
A lady's heart with trifles light as air,
Best pleased sometimes with toys ; and he was not
Devoid of beauty, was in person tall,
Easy in manners, frank in his discourse,
And sumptuous, showy, dashing in attire.


Darius nevertheless resolved to push
The war again, incited by his slave,
Who at each feast, at every private meal,
Or public banquet, cried with voice aloud,
“ Remember the Athenians ! ” till the sound
Mocked like a scornful demon at his ear,
And roused his wrath. He forthwith orders gave
To Datis and to Artaphernes, then
Chiefly in favour, to invade and take
Athens and Eretria, and bring to him
Their citizens in chains. From Media came
The former, now advanced in years, but famed
For caution, pious, and benevolent :
The latter was his nephew, son to him

Who governed Sardis, whose intemperate youth
Needed the fellowship of age to guide
His counsels, and his actions to direct.
Hippias accompanied them ; and now roused
With fiery zeal to gain heroic fame,
Viasa joined the army, studious ease
Exchanging for the horrid strife of war,
His muse abandoning for earthly love,
And for that love, so wonderfully strong,
Preferring hell to heaven : for war is hell,
And peace is heaven even in this world.

The different forces had at length arrived
On the Cilician court, and there embarked,
Proceeding thence to Samos, whence they crossed
The Icarian sea, fearing to bear along
The shores of Thrace, and the dread promontory
Of Athos, where their former fleet had met
Such sore disasters. First they bent their course
To Naxos, which they unresisted seized,
But found the town deserted, to the hills
The inhabitants having fled, too weak to oppose
Such formidable foes. Those who were caught,
Were promptly put in chains, and sold as slaves :
The private houses, and the temples, all
Were sacked and pillaged, then consumed by fire :
Which done, the Persians to the neighbouring isles
Set sail. But while they perpetrated this
Wanton depredation, from Delos fled
The sacred people, and a shelter sought
At Tenos, leaving to the enemy
Their homes, their far famed sanctuary, and god :
For the whole island was a holy shrine,
To worship dedicated, peace, and love ;

So solemn deemed, that not the steed of Mars
Trode with its iron hoof the pious soil,
Nor e'en the dog, the faithful friend of man,
Followed his master there, lest he might harm
Inferior animals; the sick might not
Remain within its precincts, lest their breath
Contaminate the air, and there no tomb
Found even Death, but elsewhere had to seek
A grave, the gift of some contiguous shore.
Inspired with sentiments of piety,
At Rhenea Datis moored his fleet, though bound
To Delos, and a herald sent to greet
The fugitives, who them accosted thus.
"O why, ye blessed people! do ye fly
Affrighted? why of Datis think so ill,
Who is not come to injure you? Had he
Not been commanded by his sovereign lord
Not to molest ye, of his own accord
He never could have offered to a place
So sanctified, where deities were born,
Insult or violence. Safe from all harm,
Return, and dwell in peace, as heretofore!"
After this message Datis on the isle
Landed, and with magnificence and pomp
Presented on an altar incense worth
Three hundred talents, to the God of light,
Who hated blood, a precious sacrifice. **
The moment he departed from the place,
An earthquake shook the island, every rock
Trembled, and e'en the columns of the fanes
Toppled and bent, although the air was calm,
And in his high meridian shone the sun
So bright, it seemed a holiday of joy
Up in the skies, while down on earth was gloom

Portentous : for the Delians thought their isle
Again adrift to sail the stormy surge,
As 't was at first, till by the trident struck
Of Neptune, when it ceased its wandering cruize,
And fixed immoveable. When the first shock
That stunned their senses with alarm had past,
They looked upon it as a prodigy
Sent by Apollo to forewarn the Greeks
Of coming ills, of evils yet unborn,
But labouring into birth. And now the fleet
Had gained the southern headland that protects
Carystos from the Ægean billows swelled
By Thracian blasts. With garlands were the prows
Bedecked, and flags and standards on the poops
Streamed to the winds, bright as the purple clouds
Of eve, enamelled by the setting sun,
Then resting on Parnassus' heights to take
A lingering farewell of the land he loved.
The rippling wave, gilt by his golden beams,
Splashed dripping from the keels in showers of stars,
Or opals with their iridescent hues
Shattered to dust : the sea 's alive with light
One moment, then it flickers as a lamp,
Till the gray haze diaphonous of night
Invests it round, as with a mantle flung
To hide its heaving bosom from the eye
Of day, still peeping : in the flashing spray,
With phosphorescent streak in sinuous trail
Marking their tracks, the dolphins leap and dash
And gambol, meteors submarine that vie
With polar splendours. Rising in the east,
The Leader of the heavenly hosts appears,
And opes the universe to wondering sight,
Delighted. From the skies serene descend



Nectareous dews, that seem the falling tears
 By angels shed for man's transgressions, wept
 So oft and cancelled, still left unatoned
 By man, still sinning. While the neighbouring shore,
 From fir and pine groves on the mountain tops,
 Distils balsamic odours to the moon :
 The musk rose scents the dells ; ambrosia fills
 The air from spicy fields and thymy hills ;
 And Beauty, slumbering on her couch, inhales
 'Midst blissful dreams of love the balmy gales.
 What eye could look upon the lovely scene,
 Nor feel disposed to muse, could have no mind.
 Viasa gazed with rapture till he found
 His soul uplifted, and the past forgot ;
 The present and the future, all forgot
 In that long glance, when Contemplation sprung,
 Spurning the earth, and plumed for distant skies,
 Swifter than lightning that encircles earth
 During the single twinkle of a star,
 And through the bounds of space interminable
 Passed, revelling amongst the myriad worlds,
 Dazzled with glories.

“ What a wondrous sight ! ”

Exclaimed Viasa : “ Infinitude unveiled !
 Innumerable worlds are scattered far
 In unimaginable space, and seem
 But diamond dust ; yet to this dust compared,
 Our earth is but an atom to the sun —
 A dew-drop falling in the ocean tide,
 Or on the sea-shore but a grain of sand ;
 So small indeed, that it is scarcely seen
 By other planets distant in our sphere,
 And e'en invisible to nearest stars

Of other systems. That empyrean deep,
That void illimitable rolls ceaseless on,
Where navigate the countless orbs, and bear
Their freights and passengers, perhaps to sail
For ever without meeting shoal or shore ;
Perhaps in some port at their journey's end
To land, perhaps to wreck upon their route,
Or hissing, sink in the abyss of nought,
And mix with Chaos. Wherefore not? since death
Is fate to all things : worlds as well as men
Must die : change is the sovereign law of God,
Who only lives for ever, still unchanged.
To be is not to have been, and not to be—
A short time hence for the whole universe :
Yet nothing perishes ; what lives, but dies—
Is changed, but not annihilated, death
Being another form of life, a new
Creation. What if darkness shroud the skies !
The sun will shine to-morrow : if there seem
A chaos, still the great organic world
Is living, feeding, growing, breeding still :
And if the living blade of grass still breathes,
And drinks its sap through fibrous veins, when dead
It teems with life no less ; a world complete
Becomes, alive with numerous creeping things.
To power almighty, 't is the same to make
An atom or a world. Will he create
Anew this blade of grass, that falling orb,
Which shoots through Hades, from its orbit hurled
By death's strong arm ; and will he mould afresh
Man's dunghill body, organised again
Into new forms, and his great master work,
The soul, annihilate ; that spark divine
From his own bright ethereal fire, that mounts

High in the air, and plays with beams of light,
Walks on the rising billows, tempests rides,
Dances with darkness, and with eye unhurt
Dares the full splendour of the mid-day sun?
'T were blasphemy to think so. As the night
Is darkest just before the dawning light,
And pain is sorest as the child is born,
So mortal life before the eternal morn
Is blackest; when we die with gasping breath,
Yet to a life immortal spring from death." **

When morning dawned, a herald was despatched
By Datis to Carystos, to demand
Submission to the Persians. As the town
Refused to give up hostages, or serve
Against their neighbours, it was soon besieged;
Its lands were wasted, and inhabitants
After a brief resistance forced to yield.

Meanwhile dissensions in Eretria held
The citizens in doubt, whether to meet
Their formidable foes with arms in hand,
And to the last defend their city, or yield
Ingloriously at once, and bend their necks
To Persian bondage. They at first agreed
To apply to Athens for assistance, which
Was promptly given, and four thousand men
Were sent to aid them: yet when these arrived,
They were as undecided as before,
Irresolute and timid. Some advised
That they should to the Eubœan rocks retreat,
And leave the town deserted: few proposed
The patriot's part, their country to protect,
Or lose it with the last drop of their blood;

While others, calculating on rewards,
Prepared to take advantage of each chance,
To sell the land that gave the traitors birth:
To so much meanness does the love of gold,
The ever burning thirst of Tantalus,
Debase the heart. The wretch who can betray
His country, would assassinate or rob,
Poison, forswear his oath, his God deny,
And kneel to devils: he's a murderer,
A parricide, a swindler, and a thief:
Scorned by his fellows, by himself abhorred,
From heaven an outcast, habitant of hell,
The thing that's most accursed and damned of all.
While thus the town to anarchy a prey
Was left, the son of Nothon, of high rank,
Advised the Athenians to at once return
Home, as it worse than useless was to stay
To help such allies. They took his advice,
And crossed the channel to Oropus, thus
Escaping from the ruin which involved
The Eretrians shortly after they were gone.

Already to the Persian arms the bourgs
Of Temenos, Chœreas, and Ægilia
Submit, and yet the Eretrians still delay
To oppose the enemy. They thought it best,—
Such the resolve, begot by coward fears,—
Not to advance and fight, and end at once
The struggle by a victory, or death,
And finish thus their terrors; but to wait
Within their city, and assiduous work
To raise the ramparts, heighten all the walls,
And store provisions for the expected siege.
The Persians stormed the place, and for six days

A stubborn contest was maintained, which cost
Considerable loss to either side.


At length, Euphorbus and Philagrus,—names
Accursed for ever,—to the foe betrayed
The city, to which an access was oped,
And which was pillaged in the heat of rage,
When blood is boiling in impetuous veins,
Hot as the liquid lava. To avenge
Their temple burnt at Sardis, all the fanes
Were plundered, sacked, defiled, and set on fire;
And all the people they could captive take,
According as Darius had ordained,
Were fettered, and reduced to menial slaves.

That very night, while yet from recent wounds
The blood was oozing; while the shrieks and groans
Of dying patriots had not ceased to call
On Heaven for vengeance; while exulting cries
From boastful warriors still of murderous deeds
Vaunted, nor yet that insult blasphemous
To God, thanksgiving in a sacred hymn
For victory, had silenced, on his couch
Slept Hippias, discomposed still in his sleep:
For how can Treason hope to slumber sound
When Guilt is still awake, and wakes Remorse,
Armed with her whip of furies? In a dream
Sent to deceive him, that when he should wake
To the reality, and find the cheat,
He might be tortured more, he thought he slept
Within his mother's arms, and her embraced
With amorous heat. Shocked at an act so foul,
The hoary sinner, undeterred by crime
Till now, now felt wild horror and disgust,
And started up.

“How strange that thoughts, not things,
Should give disturbance!” in a whispering voice,
Still half afraid, exclaimed he: “if ’t is true,
That no misfortune, howsoever sore,
But brings a balm to Wisdom, which, applied
With skill, may heal the ulcer on the soul,
Some hope, when fools would languish, I may draw
From this event. Though incest be a sin,
When truly perpetrated, yet when judged
Only as metaphor, analogy,
Or other meanings we apply to dreams,
This may be fortunate; for Attica,
My country, is my mother, and to sleep
With her must signify to be restored
To my authority, and in my house,
In Athens, in advanced old age to die.”

Thus the old traitor, with assurance prompt
And ready, construed to his benefit
The intimation which the gods had sent
To warn him to amend, while yet ’t was time
To make his peace with Heaven, justly incensed
Against him: for ambition blinds the heart,
As well as pride, and often keeps from sight
The view of our own faults, which, were they seen,
Would make us loath what we so much admire.


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BOOK IV.

THE citizens of Athens, having assembled in the temple of Bacchus to discuss the approaching invasion of their realm by the Persians, are addressed by MILTIADES, CYNÆGIRUS, and ARISTIDES, whose suggestions they adopt, and accordingly prepare for resistance. While measures are taken to put the city in a state of defence, PHIDIPPIDES, the herald, is despatched to Sparta, to crave the assistance of that republic. A few days afterwards, the Persian army lands at Marathon, under the direction of HIPPIAS, who, losing one of his teeth in the sand of the shore while marshaling the troops just disembarked, regards it as an unlucky omen.

'T WAS now high noon, and the full blazing sun
Shot on the ocean, earth, and air his beams
Effulgent, dim with the excess of light,
Hazy from brightness, seeming now to move,
Tremble, and creep, to start and dance, and speak,
For a low murmur on the attentive ear
Strikes humming: surely 't is the sun that lives
And whispers! since all nature else in deep
Silence is hushed; the very wind asleep:
Nor on Hymettus' thymy banks the bee
Now culls the bloom, nor chirps upon the bush
The shrill cicala: nothing breathes or stirs,
Except the lizard, rustling in the copse
The fallen leaves, as on the dragon fly,
To slumber rocked upon a lily's leaf,
And drugged till drunk with odours, swift it springs.
How changed the scene at Athens! There where Sleep,




Relaxed by sultry heat, was used to take
A short siesta ; where the day to night
Was wont to turn, and sunny skies to drop
The dews of slumber, thick as stellar rays
And moonshine ; when the very dogs had ceased
To bark, because no robbers stalked the streets
Deserted, tenanted by Sleep alone,
So still and solemn, likest then to Death
Reposing on the vast infinitude
Of endless glories : loudest uproars now,
Waves upon waves of tumult, to the skies
Reverberating, heaved, a sea of din,
Tost by a tempest, as the human crowds
Rush to the theatre of Bacchus, where
A council, by the Prytanes in haste ²⁵
Called, was to hold its sitting, to discuss
The approaching peril from the Persian arms.
The people, with the activity inspired
By fear, press hither, pale-lipped, to inquire
What further danger they had yet to dread ;
For every hour gave birth to monstrous shapes,
Unknown, unthought of but the hour before ;
Then strive to borrow courage from despair,
Half frantic, screaming, cursing, laughing loud
Alternately, as each emotion passed,
Now like a thunder cloud, now airy mist,
Across their souls, and cast their shadows there,
Gloomy as death one moment, then as bright
As hope, whose hues are in the rainbow's dyes
Dipped, that foretells the passing of the storm.
In midst of all this noise the archons pass,
The magistrates and officers of law,
The senators, the generals, and last,
The priests officiating for that year,




And take their seats. With blood of victims slain
For sacrifice, the place being purified,
A herald rises, and recites a prayer
Addressed to heaven for aid ; and which contained
Dire imprecations 'gainst whatever wretch
Had bribes received his country to betray :
He then proposed the subject of debate,
Adding, " What citizen can give advice
In this important crisis, let him mount
The tribune." Stern Miltiades advanced,
While a low murmur, whispering applause,
Disturbed the previous silence, still as death,
Since the debate had opened : such a tone
In a dead calm presages oft the storm,
The tempest call, whose sullen voice is heard
By distant billows gathering up their wrath.
Morose he looked, ferocious, and severe,
And yet majestic ; from his flashing eyes
Beamed pride effulgent, looming through the frowns
His face o'ershading, as the glorious Sun
Triumphant rides above the thunder clouds.
Slowly and calmly he pronounced his words
At first, yet every intonation proved
Better than rant, how resolute his soul
Had fixed her purpose ; but he warmer grew
As his speech flowed, like iron gaining heat
By the hard blows repeated by the sledge
That moulds it. Thus the warrior began :
" This day, Athenians ! will eternised be
In all the annals of the world, and held
Sacred, or cursed for ever : in the heavens
'T will be remembered, marked as our disgrace,
Or honour : at this moment, while I speak,
Perhaps it is recording to our shame ;

For on this day will Liberty be born
To grow, and strengthen with our growth, and live
Immortal on the earth; or in the womb,
Now teeming with the burden, find its grave,
A false conception, dying ere it breathed.
We 've come here to decide, for on us rests
The alternative, and not on savage power
Coercing, whether slaves or free we 'll be.
If now ye fail in manhood, shrink and faint,
Ye will deserve your fate, and must prepare
Your limbs for fetters, and your backs for blows,
Learn how to tremble at the angry frowns
Of tyrants, crouch prostrated to the dust
To rude barbarians, and whom you have scorned,
Worship with humble homage as the gods.
Nay, you must render all that you possess,
What you have earned by labour, or obtained
By industry: you must deliver up
Your parents' lives, who gave you life, or see
Them living, treated with a cruelty
More terrible than death: your children yield,
To hate and curse for the horrid lot
Your cowardice awarded them: nay more,
You must resign into the brutal arms
Of taunting victors your own faithful wives,
To be embraced and ravished in your sight.
Rather than this, be cruel now at once,
To spare them worsèr tortures! whet your knives,
And rip the heart out, which so oft has beat
Attuned to yours, and with its blissful throb
Answered your call for happiness and love!
This were more merciful than them to leave
To writhe and struggle in adulterous lust,
To feel the sting of shame, and loathe the act



That sinks them in their own esteem,—the pang
The most intolerable of all the pains
To be endured, the torment of the damned.
What do ye fear? Are ye afraid to die?
Ye then are dead already: to fear death
Is to be always dying. O but think,
There's not a passion but can conquer death!
Ambition dares it; and Revenge will seek
Its dread encounter; at its scowling frown
Honour will laugh; Love slights its menaces;
And Grief pursues its shadow for a toy
To play withal; e'en Pity's self, most meek
Of all the virtues, the most delicate
And tender, masters it: then can it be
So terrible? Remember that oft Fear,
That strives from dangers to escape, will run
And meet them; and that Courage sometimes shuns
The fate it braves! Ye dread the multitudes
Arrayed in arms against you. Let them be
Numbers beyond all number, and more thick
In serried ranks than autumn's harvest fields:
Yet be assured, whate'er their numbers be,
That army's always beaten where affright
First enters! 'T is not multitudes of slaves
Can vanquish freemen; for one noble heart
Will combat hundred cowards: victory
Is valour's meed, and always its reward:
And never freemen fail until they turn
Foes to themselves, and, quaking at their fears,
Let fear subdue them. 'T is the little soul
That shrinks from every enterprise, that is
Ever a slave: each danger it invests
With shapes appalling, which in its alarm
Only exist: from the sheer dread of death


It lives to die each moment of its life.
The brave disdain to live unless they breathe
The air of freedom: they are never slaves:
If peril threatens, they will stare the face
Of peril, and disarm it of the half
Of all its terrors. Is your cause become
So desperate, that for your homes and hearths,
Your altars, and your gods, ye dare not strike
A single blow? Beneath these roofs around
Your fathers lived, and worshiped at these shrines.
Will ye abandon them, by barbarous hands
To be defiled and plundered? Shrink ye then
From ire of men, and from your fathers' curse
Fly not, nor dread the anger of the gods?
Ye dare not be so base! In such a cause
Cowards would fight, the very slave would die."
He finished speaking; from his fiery eye,
His outstretched nostril, and his curling lip
Denouncing wrath, rebuke, disdain, and pride.
As he sat down, brave Cynægirus rose,
Brother of Æschylus, illustrious both
For deeds of valour; still more famed the last
For lore dramatic: he the olive wreath
Of art inwove with battle's laurel crown,—
The warrior's and the poet's palms entwined.
Not age advanced the hero for the right
To speak in that assembly, but his zeal,
His well known character for probity,
And fearless courage. Only thirty suns
Had bronzed his visage, still with charms of youth
Resplendent, like the statue sculptors form
Of Lyæan Bacchus, bland, benevolent,
Almost effeminate: yet strange to say,
Beneath so much benignity lay hid



A fire of choler, so intense and fierce
That none would dare to anger him : in peace
His heart was ocean in a summer's calm,
The winter's tempest in the battle's din.
The senate Cynægirus thus addressed :—
“ Our cause is not so desperate but we
May soon improve it, if we be but firm
And resolute. Despair annihilates,
But hope repairs our vigour : and to hope
To the most wretched is allowed ; to us
The more, since we rely upon the gods,
Jealous of mighty mortals : they uphold
Often the weak, and strike the haughty down.
From this I argue our success in arms,
For heaven will stand our friend. If heaven thought
One king alone should reign upon the earth
Despotic, 't would have made that king a god,
And not mere man. But being nought but man,
Darius would be god, and with proud aim
Stretches across the universal world
His hand, to grasp it, more to conquer still,
More to subdue, nor stops in his career
Of blood and slaughter, but keeps driving on.
More he attempts to gain, more he excites
Celestial envy ; higher he would fly,
The greater is the wrath divine that waits
To hurl him lower, to as low a gulf
Of ruin and disaster, as the height
Of glory was sublime to which he sought
To mount, aspiring to the very skies.
The gods are just ; and even now prepare
His punishment. Imperious though he seem,
Commanding millions who obey his nod,
Yet of his myriad slaves is he the slave

Most abject of them all : ambition pays
The price of its own slavery, to buy
Dominion over others : lust of power
Involves the loss of liberty : the slave
Has but one master, but the monarch has
As many as the subjects of his realm.
If reason, then, forbids you to admire
This slave of slaves ; if him you more despise
Than honour ; will ye fear that which ye scorn,
And serve what ye abhor ? Darius has
All things to lose : upon this battle's die
He 's staked his fame, his sceptre, and his crown,
His wealth, and his dominions, in return
For one poor wish, the state of Attica,
A barren province, yielding to hard toil
A barren recompense. If it we lose,
We lose not much, and may more fruitful lands
Find elsewhere, in Hesperia, far removed
From reach of his ambition : but if we
Should beat his myrmidons, what seer shall tell
The prospects opened to our conquering arms !
Greece may invade in turn, and Asia feel
The wrath resentment nerves. The past still reads
An useful lesson to the present time :
What will be may be known by what has been.
Had Persia tamely to the Median yoke
Bowed, it had still dependent been, and paid
Its vassal tribute ; but it took up arms
For its defence when menaced, and prevailed.
Let the Athenians act as Persians did,
What happened then perhaps may happen now !"

He ended his discourse, and loud applause
Burst from the crowd, uproarious as the noise



Of alpine storms, when thousand ghosts contend,
And struggle for the mastery of the sky,
Crushing beneath their tread the mountain pines;
So much the people were rejoiced to find
That from necessity Despair might drain
Some drops of comfort, to reanimate
Hope, fainting fast. Then Aristides rose,
Always serene, in his demeanour calm
As is the rainbow in the summer shower,
Smiling away the clouds. Thus he addressed
The multitudes collected in the hall:—
“It is a law of nature that no men
Are perfect; all have faults: were it not so,
They would require no government or laws.
Were they devoid of vanity and pride,
Courts would be turned to deserts, and kings left
To be mere men: but people are content
Within the palace to be slaves, so they
May rule elsewhere. Then why Darius blame,
Who would not be the despot that he is
Were men not slaves? No, right and might are one
In the opinion of the world; and fools
But govern fools. To give the king his due,
He's loved by all his subjects, and commands
Their hearts as well as hands: he has no need
To bribe a senate, or the people cheat.
Him to calumniate is to deceive
You, O Athenians! who, I trust, require
No false insinuations you to teach
Your duties. 'T is impossible for him
To be immaculate, he is but man:
Nor can his government, being ruled by men
Defective, but be so. But pity 't is,
That in a place so high exalted, where

He might to millions do so much of good,
He is inclined to do to thousands harm,
As now he 's seeking Athens to involve
In woe and ruin. 'T is his rank, exposed
To evil counsellors, and not his heart ;
For that is guiltless of the crime, if fame
But speak aright his merits. Were all things
Shared justly, to all men would nature give
An equal portion ; none would suffer want,
Nor any surfeit : but his fellow man
Man wrongs, and calls it justice ; if he rob,
'T is virtue, and 't is glory if he kill.
I never meet a beggar in the streets,
Or see a child naked, or clad in shreds
Of tatters, dangling from his gaunty ribs,
With dirt begrimed, and vermin covered o'er,
Shivering beneath the wintry frost, while cough
Barks the fell rage of sickness in his chest,
And famine eats his bowels for a prey,
But I accuse your greed. Were ye but just,
There were no beggars to pollute your streets :
Where there 's enough, where there 's wherewith to spare,
None there should lack. First learn then to be just,
Ere ye accuse your enemies ! Ye cry
Against the monarch who would swell his state
With tinsel pomp at your expense ; yet thief
The pauper's natural rights to fill your maws
Insatiate with luxuries. Ye shout
Till rings the welkin, that not hell contains
A demon devastating more mankind,
Who brings more sin and woe upon the world,
More misery and pain, than the vile things
Of gilded clay, that swagger on a throne ;
And yet upon your easy chairs you act

The fiend as well. A truce to slander then.
Your country is invaded. Will ye yield
To be the vilest and most wretched slaves
The earth has seen? or will ye dare to die
Rather than live to be what ye abhor?
'T is a hard lesson to learn how to die;
Yet there 's a task still harder: 't is to learn
How to be happy, lacking self esteem.
Self condemnation keener strikes than death,
And feels the agony of dying still.
Ye will not quail, then; but in arms defend
Your country, your religion, altars, homes,
Your families, your rights to freedom, thus
Menaced, insulted, and attacked. Be firm,
And be united! First to Sparta send
A messenger, to claim immediate aid:
She 's bound to help us in the common cause
Of Greece; for should we in this contest fall,
Her turn will then be next, till not a state
Remain unsubjugated to the sway
Of Persian despotism, but in one tomb
Hellas be buried, no more known on earth.
Meanwhile, make every effort to recruit
Your forces, store the magazines with corn
To stand a siege protracted, call to arms
All able-bodied men, old age and youth,
Too weak to bear the buckler and the helm,
Can lend a hand to burnish armour bright,
To grind the battle axe, and sharpen swords,
And manufacture arrows! Lose no time
In this emergency, lest all be lost,
But with united strength meet force with force!"

Him followed other orators, who spoke

In favour of resistance : none had dared
To recommend submission, now that hate,
Anger, and vengeance fired the maddened crowds,
As high excited by their hopes, as erst
Depressed by their despair : though many wished
Ill to their country, owed a spiteful grudge
To freedom, and preferred the tyrant rule
Of Hippias, yet they were too much afraid
To express their thoughts, or openly indulge
Their sympathies. The Presidents request
The assembled people to decide at once
For peace or war : peace bought by slavery,
Or war to purchase freedom. All at once
Thousands of hands are lifted up in air,
In serried ranks, thick as the wood of firs
On Ceta's shaggy top, 'midst stunning cries
Of War, war, war ! or Death at once, or war !
War being hence decreed, a herald read
The resolution taken, and inquired
If any wished to enter a protest.
No voice was raised, nor murmured e'en a lip
To show dissent. A president then rose,
And in few words dissolved the meeting, which
Broke up, and separated to their homes.

By the command of the Athenian state,
Phidippides, the herald, now prepared
To speed his way to Sparta, to demand
The aid required. Upon his head he quoifed
A cap of rushes, pervious to the air,
To cool his brows, yet of a texture fine,
Fixed by a fillet underneath the chin :
Elastic sandals to his feet he girt,
So lithe, that when he sprung he seemed to fly

With Hermes' heel-armed wings: a tunic short
His person clothed, with girdle fastened tight
Around his waist, to strengthen and support
His spine: and in his hand he held his staff
Of office, formed of polished ivory,
Curiously carved, and decked with silver studs:
Of graceful manners, fluent in his speech,
And dignified, and comely in his looks.
Accoutred thus, he passed the city gates,
With many a blessing poured upon his head
For his safe journey, and his prompt success;
And while the throng ejaculated praise
And admiration, he had crossed the bridge
That spanned Cephissus' narrow stream, and shot
Out of their sight, already on the road
To famed Eleusis, where the festival
Of Ceres, on each lustre held, revealed
With awful pomp the mysteries of God,
And nature, under figured signs and types,
Shadowed to human reason; then first taught
That worship's science, and idolatry,
Instinctive recognition of the laws
That govern all things, and acknowledgment
Of the existence of a power divine
That frames and guides those laws. . Megara next,
Built on two rocks, on the Saronic gulf,
He reached, nor yet had rested him to breathe,
Though he had travelled nearly thirty miles;
But unfatigued pushed on, with steady step,
Running sometimes, but mostly on a trot,
Yet then as swiftly moving as the steed
That draws a chariot. Ere the sun had set
That eve, and night had risen on the sky,
He 'd gained the Isthmus where the sacred games

Were celebrated, and a garland, wove
Of pine leaves, crowned the victor, better pleased
Than with a jewelled diadem. Here stopped
Phidippides a moment, to partake
A slight repast, and give his limbs a rest,
The better to pursue with ease his course.
As soon, however, as the planets hung
Their lamps to light his path, he onwards marched
Again, with measured tread, and nimble heels,
Scarce bending down a stalk of grass, so light
He trod. Nemæa by the early dawn
Is next attained, where Hercules, in vain
Having attacked the lion with his club
And arrows, was obliged to squeeze to death
The monster, whose impenetrable skin,
An useful trophy of his conquest, graced
The hero's shoulders : and here also games
Commemorated that exploit, the first
Of all his labours. Now Mycenæ looms
In sight, renowned in the dramatic page,
The fatal realm of Pelops' fatal race :
Then Argos opens to the herald's view,
Built by the giant Cyclops, and once first
Of all the Grecian states, when Atreus' son
Commanded princes at the siege of Troy ;
But so reduced by Spartan power, and sunk
From her high pristine grandeur and her fame,
As now to seek alliance with the foes
Of Hellas, rather than espouse the cause
By Lacedemon friended : so much hate
Divides and separates the farther those
Connected closest, whether neighbouring realms,
Communities, or kindred, 't is the same ;
The nearer are the ties that should unite

In love and friendship, deadlier is the rage.
He 's past the grove and lake of Lerna, where
The Danaides their husbands' slaughtered heads
Threw, and Alcides killed the dreadful snake,
In whose envenomed gall his arrows dipped,
Inflicted wounds incurable, as proved
On Nessus and himself; yet iron rust
Healed Philoctetes, after ten long years
Of cruel sufferings on a desert isle.
And now gray Evening, on Parthenius' top,
Sat brooding calm and darkness, with her wings
O'ershading peaceful plains and vales, where roved
Arcadian shepherds, driving to their pens
Their bleating flocks; while from some cottage door
The honest watch-dog bayed a welcome home
To hinds o'erlaboured, from their rural work
Returned to taste the sweets repose enjoys
After hard toil. The tortoises had crept
Into their holes, and birds to mossy nests
Repaired, all but the pensive nightingale,
Who now his sad lament in liquid notes
So softly tuned, the listening woods were hushed
In sympathising pity: not a leaf
Stirred on the aspen; not a murmur broke
The solemn silence, save his sweet complaint,
Or else the cricket's chirp, or beetle's hum,
Droning his vesper song. It was the spot
Where Dryads often danced on summer's eve,
Knit hand in hand; and virgins, sick of love,
On moonlight nights, at Aphrodite's shrine,
With sylvan flowers crowned, prayed aid divine
To their consuming passion. Here he stopped
A little while. While gazing on the scene,
And musing how he could with nature live,

Be next door neighbour to the crafty fox,
Bid a good morrow to the timid hare,
Good evening to the rabbit, a good night
To bats and owls, and welcome to them all,
And his own kind for ever hence eschew ;
An echo, or a whisper moved the air,
And roused him. " 'T is the croaking of the frogs,"
Exclaimed Phidippides, " or lizard's tick,
Or cooing of the turtle doves—but hush !
No, 't is the music of the night-wind's harp,
But lightly touched." This scarcely had he spoke,
When straight before him, as if from the air
He 'd dropped, or grown from out the ground, a form
Grotesque, with horns erect upon his head,
A ruddy visage, nose awry and flat,
And features homely and distorted, stood,
And stopped his path. The herald in amaze
Beheld his nether parts depend in shape
Like to a goat, with cloven hoofs, and hide
Hirsute and hairy, holding in his hand
A syrx, fashioned out of seven reeds.
'T was Pan, the god of shepherds, who him thus
Accosted : " What, Phidippides, dost thou
Here at this hour untimely ?" Panic-struck,
His members trembling, while a gelid sweat
Oozed from his brow profusely, thus replied
The herald, stammering : " I 'm to Sparta bound,
Sent by my countrymen, by Persian arms
Menaced, to seek from Lacedemon aid."
" I 'll aid them," answered the divinity,
" Though little they deserve that in their woes
My power should intervene, to save from harm
Who ne'er have done me service. Every bourg,
Here in Arcadia, worships me, and builds

An altar or a temple ; scarce a field
But has my statue raised ; my oracle
On Mount Lycæus stands, and festal games
Are yearly held there : while I 'm scarcely known
At Athens, where no shrine of mine appears.
Yet am I great among the greatest gods,
The emblem of fecundity, and type
And principle of all things. The universe
I represent ; and on my breast this star
Bear as the symbol of the firmament :
My every feature is a mythic sign,
Of wonder the expression ; unto men
Revealed imperfectly, but by the gods
Distinctly seen, who honour me and love,
For I am their co-equal. This relate
To the Athenians, that I 'll succour bring
When opportune : nor let them longer wait
To raise me shrines, and pay me homage meet,
Due now to me the more from past neglect !"
He said ; and in the alleys disappeared,
Returning to his old pursuit to catch
The wood nymphs, frolic god, whose wanton arms
They dread, and fly, wild shrieking through the hills.
Phidippides, in quite as much alarm,
Delayed not on his route, afraid to see
The sylvan deities, a crime amerced
By madness, human curiosity
To check and punish ; but on nimble heels
Fled fast, as though he were himself pursued,
And soon arrived at Sparta. There he sought
The magistrates, and them accosted thus :
" O men of Lacedemon ! Athens sues
For your assistance, by an army vast
Of Persians threatened to be hourly whelmed ;

Who have already seized Eretria, burnt
Her temples, and to slavery reduced
Her citizens; and now prepare to land
In Attica. O let it not be said
That the most ancient city of all Greece
Into the hands of a barbarian foe
Fell, and you looked serenely on the loss,
Nor helped to save her. Greece, already weak
By the desertion of the northern states,
And by Eretria's fall, when Athens falls,
Will be enfeebled further; and the war
Will reach your realms, then left alone to stand
Against the power of Asia. Either give
Immediate succour, or our cruel fate
Will prove the certain prelude of your own!"
To this harangue a senator replied,
And promised aid; yet ne'ertheless remarked
That in their state there was a certain law
Made by Lycurgus, that no enterprise
Of moment could be undertaken till
The moon was at its full; that now it was
Only the ninth day of the month, too soon,
According to their statutes, to permit
An army thence to march; but when arrived
That time, their troops should to their succour fly.

With this response, Phidippides returned
To Athens, where he also, to their joy,
Related his rencontre with the god.
They, grateful for the promises of Pan,
Forthwith erected near the citadel
A temple to his service, and their past
Neglect amended by a sacrifice,
And race of torches, yearly at his shrine
Held to commemorate his aid divine.

Meanwhile great bustle through the town ensued :
Here walls were building, and high mounds of earth
Raised to support and strengthen them, to make
The place secure, or less accessible ;
Here soldiers drilling ; there the orators
Haranguing crowds, to fire with confidence
Hearts nearly fainting with their fears and doubts :
Corn in the magazines was storing : swords,
Applied against the whirling grinding stone,
Were polished bright, with sharpened edge to cut
A limb with one stroke through ; in fires were cast
The rusted iron, beat on anvils huge
With ponderous hammers, midst a deafening noise,
To blades for pikes and spears ; bucklers were patched,
And shields were furbished ; armour scraped and cleaned ;
The old domestic helmet, legacy
From sire to son for centuries, was scrubbed,
And looked like new : confusion reigned around
With Babel tumult, from the sounding brass,
And tinkling steel, with human voices joined.
Such noise and such a preparation stir
To speed the work of Death, who busy plies
His fatal trade, without the officious aid
Of man quite quick enough : in deeds of love
And blessed charity how slow to move !
As if the gracious act had smit the hand
With palsy, and the heart were palsied too.


The Eretrian prisoners had been removed
By Hippias to Ægilia : and as the fleet
Now crossed the channel, and at Marathon
Landed the Persian troops, in rank and file
He drew them up upon the adjoining beach.
While thus employed, a fit of sneezing seized,
Attended with a cough, the traitor prince,

And knocked a tooth out from his bony gums,
Loosened by age, which fell upon the sand,
Much to his grief. The armed warriors sought
The osseous excrement, as though it were
A gem of priceless value: royal teeth
Must surely be more precious than the fangs
Of vulgar people! so the herd of beasts,
Not men, must then have thought, or else their toil
Had seemed most ludicrous; yet vain it was,
For it could not be found: on which the prince
Sighed deeply, as he revolved within his soul
The inauspicious omen, as he deemed,
And thus remarked: "This country is not ours,
Nor ever will be: howsoever great
Our power, we shall not conquer it: my tooth
Possesses all the kingdom that is mine!"
Such was the only useful lesson taught
The banished monarch by adversity:
It taught him how to know himself, a task
That Pride can never learn; that he was man,
No better than his fellows; that Revenge,
Though sweet as honey, carries armed a sting;
That Hate is suicidal, for it wounds
And kills itself when it would stab its foe;
That Envy eats the ulcer gangrenous,
That Malice cankers still, and still keeps green;
And that to bear with fortitude the fate,
Whate'er it be, that Heaven is pleased to send,
Is to disburden it of all its ills.

BOOK V.

AT the dawn of day, the Persian army is marshaled in battle order on the plain of Marathon, contiguous to the shore, while on the rising ground, close to the temple of Hercules, the Athenian forces are still scattered in groups, near their watch-fires. These are alarmed by the sudden appearance of a body of troops descending the hill to the north of their position, which proves, however, to be a band of one thousand Plataeans coming to their aid. A council of war is held, at which, after some opposition, the advice of MILTIADES for an immediate engagement prevails; who thereupon gives orders for the attack. The Greeks are successful on the two wings, but their centre is overpowered by the Persians and Sacæ under the command of ARTAPHERNES, who slays STESILAUS, one of the Athenian leaders. But the Grecian wings turning round, and charging upon the victorious Persian centre, aided by the supernatural prowess of their demigods, Theseus and Echælus, completely defeat it: on which there is a general flight of the Persians towards their fleet, pursued by the Greeks. Here, however, the latter are opposed by a formidable force under the conduct of VIASA, who kills CALLIMACHUS, the polemarch, in single combat. Attempts being made in vain by the Greeks to fire the ships, seven only of which are burnt, they are obliged to retreat. On their departure, the Persians reembark, and sail round Cape Sunium, intending to attack Athens; but the signal of the shield lifted up on Mount Pentellicus by the partisans of HIPPIAS, being perceived, and its meaning divined by MILTIADES, he commands the Grecian army to march back immediately to Athens. There the Persian commanders behold them, and, deterred by their presence from attempting an attack on the city, sail away, and return to Asia. A few days afterwards, the promised contingent of troops from Sparta arrive, but too late to share the glory of the victory: they nevertheless satisfy their curiosity by a visit to the field of battle.

BRIGHT as when angels tread the golden clouds
Before the grunsel of the gates of bliss,



Arose the sun, and shed upon the plain
Of Marathon his beams. The flood of light,
As with a diadem of orient gems,
Where azure sapphires, and the jasper green,
Carbuncle's flame, the purple amethyst,
And glowing topaz mix their various sheen,
Caps Mount Pentelicus. Soft is the air
As whispering sighs of love, and sweet the dew
As tears of bliss. In sylvan flowers sleep
The pearl-drops, rocked by zephyrs as they creep
To sip the stores of nectar. Yet descends
Death on the field, and flutters on the wing,
Snuffing his prey; while flocks of grisly ghosts
Him follow, hovering about unseen.


Along the plain, adjoining to the shore,
Encamped the Persian army, in array
Of battle marshaled. In the central ranks,
The post of honour, bands of Persians, mixed
With Sacæ, shone resplendent o'er the rest,
Distinguished from them by their fine attire.
The former quoified with helmets, clothed in robes
Of different colours, thick with plates of steel
Studded, in texture like a fish's scales,
And shod with sandals, whence a metal greave,
Laced up in front, bound up the knee and leg;
While for their arms they had a spear, though short.
When matched with Grecian lances, and a bow
Comparatively as large, and arrows made
Of reeds; and on their right side, in a belt,
A dagger was suspended. Caps of felt,
Shaped like a cone, and ending in a point
Erect and high, adorned the latter, who
Wore trowsers loose and floating, and were armed

With bows, and knives, too short to be a sword,
Too long to be a dagger, and a sort
Of hatchet, termed a sagaris. The rest,
Who occupied the wings, of various bands
Of foot guards, archers, slingers, with a few
Squadrons of horsemen, were composed, a crowd
Accoutred diversely; some without shields,
Some without helmets, with a strip of cloth
Bound round the temples, in a bunch behind
Drawn up; while others, in a tunic dressed,
So short, it left the limbs completely bare,
Were destitute of sandals. In a car
Of ivory, inlaid with sparkling gems,
And drawn by horses of the famous breed
Of Nysa, without blemish or a speck,
Of dazzling whiteness, rode before the ranks
Datis, the Mede, in sumptuous garments clad
Of linen bleached, embroidered with the forms
Of mystic animals, and fringed with threads
Of silver, wrought most curiously, with knots
And tassels dangling. On his head he wore
A high tiara, of alternate folds
Of green and purple silk, adorned with pearls
And precious stones, that imitated stars
And demilunes. Down flowing on his vest,
Spotted with gems, his venerable beard,
In plaits arranged, shone like the northern lights
In polar regions, when the twinkling orbs
Pierce through the electric mist. Him followed close,
Within another chariot, formed of gold,
Burnished, embossed, and figured, with a shower
Of rubies sprinkled on the panels, drawn
By steeds cream-coloured, whose smooth, sleeky skin
Outvied the polished metal of the car;

Harnessed with leathern traces, golden bits,
And reins of twisted tissue, spun of wool
Clipped from the Thibet goat, and by a cloth
Covered, whereon the firmament at night
Was woven, a celestial field thick sown
With constellations, Artaphernes, now
No more luxurious and effeminate
As when he used in baths of fragrant myrrh
To steep his limbs, and with the pumice stone
To rub his body, till as smooth as glass,
It shone a mirror, and to anoint his skin
With oil of spikenard, with the dancing girls
To languish in a measure that displayed
The melting of the heart in love's embrace;
To strike the jingling lyre, and tune his voice
Down to an echo, scarce articulate,
As if the soul were dying, and to lounge
On rose leaves, and complain his back was bruised:
Invested now in a thick coat of mail,
Where, on the breast, of brilliant jewels formed,
A sun resplendent shot his dazzling beams,
And blinded daylight. Proud as though a god
He looked, by pomp attended, and the signs
And attributes of power; yet still a slave
To vanity, for still his beard was shaved,
His eyebrows lined and painted with the dye
Of stibium, and cosmetics blanched his face
As white as milk. Supported by a rest
Within the chariot, high the standard rose,
Not the smith's leathern apron, but a pole,
Surmounted by an eagle, with its wings
Outspread, and fashioned of the purest gold, —
A marvel for the workmanship, so like
To life. Then next advanced a troop of priests

Bearing the silver altars, on which fire,
The holy emblem of their worship, burned ;
And as they passed along, their sacred hymns
Chaunted to Ormuzd, while the armed ranks
In the responses joined, with shouts so loud
They rung in every cavern of the hills,
And frightened far the flocks that grazed the sides
Of Mount Pentelicus. Thus were employed
The Persian army on the early dawn
Of that eventful day, that proved so false
To all their hopes of vengeance and their fame.

In straggling groups, beside their watch-fires stretched,
The Athenian army lay, close to the fane
Of Hercules, upon a rising ground,
Where vines were planted, waiting the command
To muster for parade. The plain below
Extended far, without a single tree,
Save in the ravines where an olive bush,
Stunted in growth, shot up its silver head :
All else a level heath, dark, desolate,
And dreary, with a marsh at either end ;
But now enlivened by the glittering sheen
Of Persia's countless hosts, as from their spears,
Bucklers, and polished helmets the flashes burst,
And lit the field, as if by meteors bright
It were illumined. Suddenly the hill,
That crowns the northern road, appears alive
With warriors, marching rapidly to join
The Athenian army. These, in mute surprise,
Gaze for an instant, too intent to solve
Their doubts to speak them : then with stammering lips
Each to his neighbour thus expressed his thoughts :
" It is the Thebans, Persia's allies, come




To hem us round!" exclaimed the panic struck,
Whom fear affected most. While others cried,
By hope elated, "'T is the Spartan force,
The promised aid!" "Their tunics are not red!" *
Replied another, by despair inspired.
At length as they descended down the steep
Declivity, and nearer to the sight
Approached, they proved to be a faithful band
Sent by Plateæa, in gratitude for help
Received from Athens at a time long past,
But still remembered, when by Theban arms
She was oppressed, and menaced in her rights,
Now to requite that service by an aid
As opportunely given, undeterred
By certain perils, sure to be incurred
If Persia should prevail. How few would risk
Their lives and freedom to repay a debt,
As did these brave Plateæans! Men are now
Too venial grown, and measure by the weight
Of gold their honour, Let our modern times,
So boasted for their virtue, shew one deed
Heroic to compare with this sincere
Devotedness, that braved for friendship death.
It stands alone, conspicuous in the page
Of history, the brightest leaf of all:
Nor was it by the Athenians unapprised,
For in acquitting obligations past
It laid a new one, which by them was paid
By future offices and acts of love;
So much doth gratitude increase in store,
Enriching both who give, and who receive,
Like Heaven's mercy, a blessing doubly blest.
Affecting was the meeting that took place
Between these heroes, who of free accord

Had, uninvited, unexpected, come
To share the perils of the approaching fight,
And the Athenians. These, encouraged more
By this example of the scorn of death,
Now felt their courage tenfold more inflamed :
How could they feel a selfish terror now,
When strangers to their cause, disdaining fear,
Had voluntarily sought to join their fate,
And gloried in the danger ! But the sound
Of Doric flutes, and blast of trumpets, now
The chiefs to council called : and straight were seen
The generals of each tribe towards the tent
Belonging to Callimachus to bend
Their steps, deep musing as they passed along.

Assembled in the tent, thus the debate
Opened Leontis, who a secret love
Bore to the rule of Hippias, and a hate
Proportionate to freedom, and the laws
That then existed in the Athenian state.
Bland in his voice, and smooth in his discourse,
And in demeanour graceful, he had won
Many to his opinions ; for he seemed
As much sincere as he was really false, —
A very snake hid underneath the grass.
“ When I compare the numbers of the foe
To our small force, I must confess my fears
Above my hopes preponderate, should we,
Guided by counsels rash, advance to attack,
Or stop to be assaulted. Folly 't is,
Nay more, 't is madness, to suppose a chance,
That e'en a shadow of a chance, exists
Of victory, should we precipitate
The battle now. Their multitudes exceed

The means of calculation ; ours amount
To one for every hundred they possess :
With their late conquests and success they 're flushed ;
While we are sunk low in despondency.
As easy were it for the billow's foam,
Tost by the blast, to struggle with the storm,
As for us to contend with yonder host.
As likely are we to arrest their march
To Athens, as the thistle's beard to stop
The wind of Autumn through this dreary heath.
It to attempt were but to slay ourselves,
But not to rescue Attica. Let us,
Rather than linger here, to certain death
Devoted, useless to our country, back
To town return, and under shelter there
Of walls and ramparts, against all attacks
Protect it, till the promised Spartan aid
Arrive. Meanwhile, from want of food the foe
Must suffer sorely : every hour that 's gained
On them entails a loss, till wearied out,
Discouraged by our obstinate defence,
They will retreat : or if the worst must come,
And they must conquer, when we are subdued,
'T will then be time enough to know the worst.
It is our duty to do all we can
To avert so sad a fate ; when that is done,
Then let us meet and welcome it, though death !"

Thus in the garb of patriotism he dressed
His speech, and thought by virtue's show to impose
On reason, and delude the leaders there
Collected to discuss the approaching war.
But he was disappointed, for his aim
Divined Miltiades, and with a look




As piercing as the cockatrice's eye,
Abashed his sainted mien, assumed to hide
His impious heart, and then responded thus :
"The honey from the deadly nightshade's cup
The bee prepares, is not less poisonous
Because 't is sweet : nor thy advice less false
Because thy words in virtue's tune are lisped.
If we return to Athens, tumults there
May rise, excited by the partisans
Of Hippias, and impair our force, too weak
Then to resist the Persians. Spartan help
Is too uncertain to rely thereon.
The present is the moment to decide
Our destiny, and end our doubts at once :
Each hour that 's lost by timorous delays,
Adds a new link to bondage which is sure
To be our fate, if hence we should retreat.
Besides, retreat creates despondency ;
While a bold countenance, even in despair,
Inspires with valour. What have we to fear
To fight with the barbarians ? We are armed
As well as they are, can endure fatigue
As well as they, are disciplined as well,
In martial exercises better learned,
And more accustomed to the toils of war.
These are no slight advantages to us
In the ensuing combat, as will prove
To be the case, if we but act as men.
Delay, I say, is dangerous ; embrace
The present instant to advance at once
To the attack. Astonished and appalled
At our intrepid bravery, the foe
Will yield, and fly affrighted from the field."
The propositions put now to the votes

Were undecided : for the attack were five,
And five for the retreat. The polemarch, ³⁷
Callimachus, enjoyed a leader's right
By right of office, and had not expressed
His wishes yet ; to whom Miltiades,
With energetic eloquence, inspired
By the importance of the issue attached
To his decision, this appeal addressed :
" On you, Callimachus, depends the doom
Of Athens, whether first of all the towns
Of Greece she will become, or low descend
To be the most contemptible, reduced
To dust and ashes ; whether we shall free
Remain, or be compelled to serve as slaves.
In what seems rashness, only prudence lies.
If you declare for battle, we are saved,
And you will have a greater glory earned
Than ever won a patriot : not the fame
Harmodius and Aristogiton
Have gained will then compare with your renown.
On your decision now rest all our hopes."

The polemarch, whose soul with valour stirred,
Gave in his judgment for immediate fight.
Hence orders through the ranks were quickly borne
To arm, and to prepare for the assault.
Straight every warrior to his tribe repaired,
Till the whole army was drawn up in files,
Extended to confront the Persian host,
Deep in the wings, lest they should be outflanked,
More shallow in the centre. On the right,
The post of honour by the Grecians deemed,
The polemarch commanded ; while the left
Was occupied by the Platæans. All


Were heavy armed : with greaves upon their legs
Of metal ; steel cuirasses on the breast,
With zones attached, by buckles fastened on ;
And brazen belts, with leather lined inside,
And stuffed with wool : depending to the knees,
The tunic, covered in the body, hid
By armour, hung in folds ; their feet were cased
In sandals ; brazen helmets graced the heads
Of the Athenians, but a leathern casque
Distinguished the Platæans from their friends :
Each was equipped with a large shield and spear
Exceeding in its length the Persian lance ;
And on the left side, to a belt affixed
Round the right shoulder passed, hung down a sword.
Some few, light armed, without a coat of mail,
Or lance, or sword, attended on the rest ;
But these were either servants, or were slaves,
In skins, or cloth, or leather dressed, and armed
Simply with darts and slings. No archers bore
The bow and arrows ; and no cavalry
Strengthened their ranks. The sacrifice announced
Auspicious omens. Midst the martial noise
Of flutes, and pipes, and trumpets, the command
Was given to charge. Immediately the ranks
Rushed on, not with accelerated march
Merely, but running at the top of speed,
Their pœans shouting with a voice so loud
It struck a panic terror in the hearts
Of the astounded Persians. As the car,
Instinct with power, alive with steam and fire,
Panting and screaming with its rapid flight
That laughs at distance, down the iron road
Rattles, outstripping in its speed the air,
And dashing on a train with passengers

Freighted, cuts through the waggons at a stroke,
And, irresistible, before its path
Hurls carriages, goods, human beings, all
In one promiscuous ruin, torn and smashed
To atoms: so the Athenian squadrons rush
With fury on the Persian ranks, and drive
The extended wings before them. In the dust
A thousand warriors wallow, with their wounds
Shrieking, inflicted by the Grecian spears;
While blood in torrents flows, the arid soil
To drench and puddle worse than wintry showers.
Foul was the scene around. Here one lay cut
In pieces—so disfigured, bruised, and crushed,
His mother had not known her darling son:
There elbow'd on the ground, another tried
With his tiara's folds the gaping gash
To close, and stanch the bubbling bursting blood,
That mocked his efforts; in despair he eyes
The vital fluid, welling as a fount,
And at the fatal sight falls prostrate down,
And faints, then rallies, and then swoons again;
Yet as he struggles in the pangs of death,
Thinks of his herds and flocks, his palm-tree groves,
His scented citron alleys, and his hut
Of bamboo, on Choaspes' distant flood.
Here hands are lopped, by the sharp cimeter
Dissevered at a stroke; or fractured skulls
Pierced by the lance, whence drop the marrow brains
In clammy lumps, and tangle round the locks.
Anon a gory trunk, begrimed with dirt,
Protruding to the sight the bowels burst;
A heart transfixed by arrow, or the lungs
By darts laid open. While at either wing
The Greeks bore down before their charge the hosts



Arrayed against them, in the central ranks
The Persians, led by Artaphernes, fought
With desperation, and the Athenian tribes,
There weakest, since their lines were marshaled there
Less deep, broke through, and drove them back with loss
Of many warriors. In his chariot stood
The soft-skinned hero, nor the least concern,
Or apprehension, or dismay betrayed
At war's grim terrors, though a novel sight
To him, accustomed only to the toil
Of dalliance; and his cohorts round him urged,
Still in a tone melodious, to assume
Their native valour, and their claim assert
To conquest, hitherto their humble slave.
Nor was he heard unheeded. Round him swarm
A multitude of brave, who danger scorn,
And dash upon the bristling hedge of spears
The Greeks present, and with their masses heaped
Crush down the barrier: while his bow he bends
With aim unerring, to his ear the string
Stretched, till the shaft bent further would have cracked;
The arrow, faithful to its errand, flies,
And death delivers at each fatal clang.
Him Stesilaus, a leader of the Greeks,
Perceived, excited by desire of fame,
Impelled besides by anger, and with speed
Advanced to intercept his wild career
Of carnage: breathless, he arrived, and slew
The nearest charger, in its breast his steel
Deep plunging; with a furious bound it fell
Prone on the earth, and stopped the chariot wheels,
The carriage near upsetting: then he hurled
His lance, that whistled as it cut the air,
At Artaphernes; but a Syrian slave

Who bore his shield, received it on the targe,
Harmless; it pierced the outer plates of gold,
But failed to penetrate the inner folds
Of tanned rhinoceros' hide. In swift return,
At him, audacious, boasting how he 'd bind
The Persian, harnessed to the other steed,
To drag the chariot, Artaphernes threw
A javelin, with such precision cast,
It struck his forehead, and dividing clean
The bilobed brain, passed through the occiput,
Parting the clustering ringlets at his nape.
With one spasmodic jerk, sheer from his feet
High in the air he leaped, then dropped a corpse,
Without a groan or kick. Now swift arrive
Themistocles and Aristides, fired
With rage implacable, and with a few
Intrepid warriors, with an onset fierce
Attack the Sacæ, gathered round the car
Their leader to protect. The cavalry,
By Hippias led, then rattle on to join
The combat: as the horses smell the war
With outstretched nostrils, breathing furious joy,
They gallop harder, and their neighs express
Defiance at all danger: down they come,
A shower of arrows darkening all the air,
Announcing their approach; which scarce announced
Ere they are present, in their swift career
Matching the winged arrow in its flight:
Perceiving which, Miltiades, alive
To every peril, to the files which formed
The Grecian wings, then eager in pursuit,
Sent orders to desist from further chase,
And form their serried phalanxes compact,
And, turning round, charge on the central ranks



Where quailed the Greeks before the Persian arms.
Now hot the struggle rages : close the lines
Of hostile columns meet, till on the shields
The bosses touch, and ring with horrid clang ;
Spears interweave with spears a dreadful web
Of slaughter ; swords now clash with adverse swords ;
And loud the crackle of the battle axe
Resounds, as with impending ruin down
On helmets, mail, and brazen bucklers fall
Its blows repeated : ridges now appear
Strewn with the dead, the bloody seed that War
Had sown that day, now reaped by grisly Death.

But who is this, in stature like a mount **
Prodigious, huge beyond all mortal bulk,
Towering preeminent above the height
Of human kind, and looking like a god ?
Divine his aspect : on his brow superb
Sit Majesty enthroned, Intelligence,
And Pride of power ; and from his fiery eyes
Glare hate, resentment, choler, and disdain
In flaming flashes : yet serene his ire,
Composed and dignified, without a roar
Or shout ; like sheets of lightning in the sky
On summer's eve, without the thunder's crack,
When not a cloud obscures the furnace cope
Of heaven, nor stirs the lightest breeze in air,
No sweeping tempest, and no pattering shower ;
But all is calm, except the electric hiss,
That tells of ruin, as the stertorous sigh
Argues that death is near. In armour clad,
In panoply resplendent, burnished bright,
A silvered mirror for the sun to see
His face, and marvel at his wondrous light,

He stalks an ample furlong at each stride
Tremendous, till the earth beneath his tread
Shakes, and the dreadful hosting intermits,
Affrighted. Havoc, on his swelling crest
Perched, on the flying ranks of Persians scowls
With blackest rage : Death follows on his track,
His shadow ; for at every murderous stroke
Dealt by his spear, whole squadrons bite the dust.
Another hero, of supernal might, *
Fights likewise for the Greeks, in rustic garb
Accoutred, simply with a coultter armed,
And routs his legions. As the simoom sweeps
The Arab pastures of their herds and flocks,
So his dread anger through the files of war
A passage clears, heaped up on either side
With mountains of the slain. Him bursting on
With slaughter, Hippias on his frightened steed,
Winged with its fear, tries to evade by flight
Accelerated, but in vain : the share
Attains him, and a cruel furrow drives
Sheer through his ribs, and ploughs his traitorous heart.
Black gore he vomits, in a torrent foul
Down streaming on his beard ; his body shakes
A moment, by a strong convulsion worked,
Then from his horse he falls, stiff on the ground.
Through the thick clouds of dust that robed the field,
His spirit fled to Hades, in its way
Joined by some thousands more that bloody day,
All squeaking, squealing, gibbering with pain
For pain anticipated, by Hermes led
To punishment : like flocks of swallows borne
By autumn winds, that make the skies resound
With chatter, as o'er continents and seas,
With pinions laboured sore, they steer their course

To reach the sunny islands of the south.
His tooth, however, was the only part
Of him that lay within his native soil;
For as they fled, the Sacæ bore his corpse
Off to the ships, where it was plunged in oil
To keep it fresh, and on the Carian coast,
On their return, was buried with the rites
And pomp awarded to his princely rank.

Hundreds within the fens and marshes sunk,
Always impassable, in their attempt
To fly from foes pursuing, and were pierced
By murderous missiles: thousands, as they ran,
Threw down their arms, embarrassing their flight,
And thought, thus unimpeded, to escape
Unhurt, and unattained: but on their rear
The Grecian troops pressed hard, with lance and dart
Smiting the hindmost, till they reached the shore
Where lay the vessels hauled up on the beach,
Where fresh battalions of the Persians, formed
In squares defensive, by Viasa led,
Checked the pursuit, and the Athenian ranks,
Disordered now, attacked in turn, and them
Repulsed. Armed cap-a-pie in Indian style,
He shone conspicuous by his cotton dress,
With golden thread embroidered, and a zone
Studded with diamonds from Golconda's mine,
The gift of Hindoo princes: on his chest
He wore a corslet of Cashmerian wool,
Wadded so thick, it foiled a sabre's thrust;
And on his head a turban, made of shawls,
In implicated folds and tortuous spires
Twisted, and glistening with vivid dyes;
It seemed some serpent with enameled scales,

Coiled up in wreaths, and ready on his foes
To dart, and hurl its venom : in one hand
He held a target, formed of pithy reeds,
Both hard and light, and covered with the skin
Of buffaloes ; and in the other grasped
A cimeter, whose metal had been steeped
In fire and water, till those elements
Tempered the blade to sever at a stroke
A golden lingot, nor the edge obtund.
Callimachus, who had at least a score
Of Persians killed, accompanied by troops
With lighted fir-brands, rushed to fire the fleet :
And hot again the battle waxed. Now roars,
Louder than rumbling thunder, on each side
Announce the fury of the combatants ;
Higher their ardour rises,—higher still,
Till reckless desperation goads the mind
To madness. Now the Greeks have nearly reached
The vessels, over hillocks of the slain
Dashing ; and now they are again beat back ;
Again they charge, and over squadrons drive
Their course, and climb the bulwarks, cords and sails
Igniting with their torches, till seven hulks
Are blazing fierce : the crackling now of fire,
And flashing of the flames, more horror add
To horrors inexpressible before.
To the dire element more ships had proved
A prey, had not Viasa then arrived
With his battalion. Him Callimachus
Perceived, and emulous of further fame,
Though all the deeds heroic on that day
He 'd done had satisfied enough renown,
Howe'er ambitious, and advancing swift
To his encounter, threw with dreadful force

His lance, whose steel then dripped with clots of blood
Of one he 'd lately felled. It struck the targe
Of reeds, and splintered several of the canes,
And might have reached his corselet, had the point
Not bent; yet it Viasa backwards drove
Six paces, reeling. Fearing a return
Of such a potent blow, Viasa rushed
In on his adversary, and his neck
Wounded, yet slightly, as his brazen shield
Warded the stroke. Callimachus his spear
Essayed to hurl again, but found it vain:
Its steel was harmless, and he had not room
To poise it round, so close upon him pressed
Viasa. Down he flung it on the ground,
And snatched his sword. Now clash with discord wild
Their weapons, glistening like a meteor's flame,
Or as the lightning flashes: each in turn
Advances or retreats, receives or rends
The thrusts alternate, till with mutual stabs
They bleed profusely. Then Viasa lifts
His cimeter, as if to spend the blow
Full on his foeman's head, but wheels it down
• So swiftly, ere it could be watched, it glides
Between the breast-plate and the mitre, cuts ^{so}
The right loin to the spine, and with the gash
The entrails lacerates. Down flows the flood
Of life in crimson cataracts; his face,
So flushed before with anger, purple and pale
Turns, corruscating like the setting day
On alpine heights; his eyes whirl round and round,
As if they sought for his departing soul
Some dwelling in the universe; he shakes
And shivers, groans and sighs and gasps, then drops
Dead. As he falls, upon a lighted brand

The blood far squirting with a hissing sound
From out his wound, extinguishes the flame.
In breathless hurry to protect his friend,
Arrived too late, came Æschylus, with wrath
Incensed, and face to face Viasa opposed
With threatening attitude, his ponderous lance
Uplifted. Now had fate in hostile arms
Two poets joined, their country's glory each,
Each equally renowned, and perhaps both
Had fallen, sacrificed to cruel war,
Had not, in pity to the human race,
Kind Heaven interposed, and spared their lives,
Prolonged a period further to instruct
Mankind in song: for Æschylus now saw
His brother Cynægirus' arm chopped off,
As at a poop-staff of a ship he snatched,
To mount the deck: this sight his ardour checked
Against Viasa, whom he left, and flew
To save his brother, now by hundred blades
Menaced, and him from dangers imminent
Rescued, but only for a few brief days,
For of the wound he subsequently died.
With him the last attempt made by the Greeks
To fire the vessels ceased: the Persian troops,
Who from the battle in the plain had fled,
Now formed their ranks in order, and o'erwhelmed
The Athenians by the press of multitudes
On myriads hurtling: hence they were obliged
To yield the ground to numbers, and retreat.


Immediately the Persians launched their fleet,
And, setting sail, to Sunium's promontory
Their course directed, leaving all their tents,
Baggage, and arms, a precious booty found

By the Athenians. As along the coast
They steered, they sent a portion of the ships
To embark the Eretrian prisoners and stores
Left at Ægilia. Scarcely had they passed
The bay of Marathon, when on the heights
Of Mount Pentelicus a shield was held
Aloft, on which the noon-day sun now struck
His beams resplendent, that with fitful light
The plain illumined. Many marked the sign,
And wondered what that token could announce :
Miltiades divined the mystery
At once. "It is a signal from the friends
Of Hippias to the Persians, to repair
To Athens, where their partizans have formed
A plot to yield the city up, too weak,
While we are absent, to resist their arms,"
Exclaimed the general : "then we must haste
Back to the town." With this he orders gave
To form their lines, and march without delay,
Without the shortest rest, though after toils
Incessant and fatiguing, such as few
Could have endured, for they had fought since morn,
Each warrior matched with hundreds. No complaint
They urged, however, better pleased to bear
Their present hardships than the servile chains
Prepared to fetter them, if they should fail
Their freedom to secure. To guard the spoils
With his own tribe was Aristides left
Behind ; while all the rest, in rank and file,
Moved on, and traversed from the battle field
Full six and twenty miles, till they arrived
At Cynosarges, close to Athens, where
They saw the fleet of Datis out at sea,
Off port Phalerum : but these dared not land,

Not finding those facilities and aids
They had expected, and deterred besides
By the appearance of the Athenian force
That had so lately vanquished them : they hence
Departed, and to Asia back returned.

Scarce had the full moon filled with silver light
Her disk orbicular, when Sparta sent
The aid she 'd promised ; for a band then left
The city of two thousand men, with such
Despatch, that in three days the space of one
Hundred and fifty miles they 'd marched, and reached
The frontiers of the Athenian state, too late
However for the battle, though their speed
Sufficed to demonstrate their zeal sincere.
So much the Persians they desired to see,
Their terror hitherto, that ere they turned
Back to their homes, they visited the field
Of Marathon, and there the trophies, gained
By virtue nerved by valour, witnessed, free
Themselves from envy : to the victors they
Rendered the meed of glory and of praise,
Acknowledging their merited renown ;
And by so doing crowned themselves with fame.

Upon the field a tumulus was raised
In honour of the brave Athenians slain ;
For the Plateæans, their magnanimous friends,
Another ; and a third mound for the slaves,
Too faithful to their masters on that day
Of glory : and ten pillars, one for each
Of the Athenian tribes, upon the spot
Erected, with the heroes' names inscribed
Who fell for freedom, to mankind proclaimed




How perishable is all human fame :
For who among them has escaped the blot
Of dark oblivion : though Pausanias read
After six hundred years the record, where
Are now the columns, where the illustrious names ?
None known but three, and these snatched from the fate
The others shared, by History's Muse, whose pen
Outlives the brass and marble of the great.
A funeral monument besides was built
For him, whose genius saved his countrymen
From chains : alas ! how soon before them charged
With fetters more degrading, with the bonds
Of ignominious shame, of crime accused,
Appeared that hero, now to mortal eyes
A God, exalted to the very stars !
Such is the destiny of human kind,
That him, for whom that pyramid was raised,
That tomb refused to shelter at his death,
Since in a common grave, with meaner dust
Commingled, found the humble warrior rest
From all the vanities of earthly life, —
From pride, ambition, flattery, and praise,
Strife, anger, hate, and malice, and contempt.

BOOK VI.

THE Athenians, in the enthusiasm of gratitude for the victory at Marathon, confer great honours on MILTIADES, and hold a festival, at which their tumultuous mirth evinces as much their past terror as their present joy. MILTIADES, too much elated at his success, turns infatuated, and in the assembly of the people proposes that they should furnish him with a fleet, and he would conduct them to where they would find immense treasures. They repose so much confidence on his judgment and abilities, that the required armament is granted to him; with which he sails to Paros, and lays siege to that island, stimulated solely by a base private resentment he bore to one of its citizens. Failing to reduce the island, he has recourse to a priestess of the Infernal Deities, who recommends him to enter the temple of Ceres, for the purpose apparently of taking away some of the sacred implements there. He follows her advice, but is seized with a panic terror, and in his haste to fly away, leaps over the outer enclosure, and receives a severe injury, which compels him to abandon the enterprise against Paros. On his return to Athens he is accused capitally, and only escapes the extreme penalty of the law by a heavy fine, which was paid by his son CIMON, as he died in a few days after his trial from mortification of his wound. DARIUS, being still determined to prosecute the war against Greece, levies a very formidable army, which he proposes to conduct in person; but is prevented by a revolt of the Egyptians from entering upon the expedition, which is consequently postponed till still greater forces are raised. In the meantime he falls sick, and in the midst of his court, in all the pomp and paraphernalia of royalty, expires in the arms of his attendants. A short time after VIASA espouses IOLANTE, and returns to India, where he composes his great work, the Mahabharat, and lives in comfort and affluence.

GREAT was the joy at Athens, and the more
Tumultuous from their former low despair,

At this important victory, achieved
By the decision of Miltiades,
To whom the highest honours were decreed,
And public thanks and public eulogies
Rendered, too poor for gratitude to pay
The debt immense it owed him : in the mouths
Of all his praise was sounded, nor yet ceased
Their lips to speak, profusely flowing still
With adulation, like a rising sea,
Swelling to highest equinoctial tides,
Nor ebbing then, but mounting higher still.
Nor were the gods forgotten, nor their shrines
Neglected. Hecatombs of victims paid
The ransom for deliverance, and blood
As copious flowed as in the battle field :
Not all their flocks and herds sufficed their vows
Rash to redeem, pledged when the mind, too full
Of terror, had all sense of reckoning lost,
And gave too liberal to the greedy gods,
Fond of the smell of sacrifice : but goats
For bulls were substituted, and the kid
Supplied the destined ram ; and Heaven lost
One half its claim, as often happens still :
For man, by conscience undeterred to rob
His fellow, will not fear to cheat his God.
Besides, a general festival the town
Turned crazy with the excess of mirth conjoined
With license : races with the lighted torch,
Gymnastic exercises, concerts played
On flutes and harps, verses from Homer sung,
The Pyrrhic dance performed by youths in arms,
And grand processions, by a chosen band
Of virgins led, selected for their charms,
Magnificently attired in garments white,



Fringed with a silver border, for the space
Of several days amused them : nor was then
Mercy forgot amid the uproarious sports,
Or Justice disregarded : all confined
In prison were set free ; such citizens
As in the late engagement had deserved
Well of their country, were with golden crowns
Presented ; every victor at the games
Was recompensed with wreaths of olive, formed
Of branches cut from Pallas' sacred trees
That grew in Academus' grove ; and last,
The slaves, who had beside their masters fought,
Were liberated, a well earned reward.

Miltiades, who had too copious drunk
Of flattery, by the inebriating draught
Became intoxicated, frantic, mad ;
And, like the swinish clown who thinks himself
A monarch in his cups, deemed he was God,
Able to rule success, and fate command :
So true it is, that fortune alters man,
Unless by virtue armed. The gaping crowd
Admire so blindly, that what they extol
They worship : then no wonder human pride
Believes itself divine, above the herd
Of vulgar brutes, and something more akin
To heaven than earth. But harder 't is for pride
To keep its footing when the summit 's reached
Of glory, than to mount the steep ascent ;
Attained no sooner than it prostrate falls.
He was the paratonnerre in the clouds,¹¹
That drew the lightning from the Persian hosts
Away from Athens, and its anger spent
Harmless. When thus a danger is escaped

That threatened life, men reverent turn, and thank
Their benefactor, whether man or god,
With equal fervour: hence when he declared,
With arrogance inflamed, that with a fleet
Of seventy ships, he them to affluence
Would lead, where they should find a mine of gold,
They him believed, and gave him what he asked,
Without inquiring whither he proposed
To go, — so great the confidence and faith
They placed in him: how could their hero fail,
Their idol err! Jove might as likely err.

With this large armament he left the port,
And sailed to Paros, and besieged that isle,
Under pretext it had the Persian arms
Assisted; but his real motive was
The hate he bore Lysagoras, accused
By him to have Hydarnes deeply incensed
Against him: thus his secret object rose
From malice and revenge. Had he then seen
Himself within a mirror, he had found
He was no longer what he'd been, but changed
In very soul, from hero to a fool,
Or something worse: that which he might destroy
The hero pardons; 't is the best revenge,
The most illustrious: but the fool is slave
To passion, and his anger rather hurts
Himself, than harms his victim. His demand
Of hundred talents to redeem the isle,
Which else would be destroyed, till not a stone
Should mark the town, was by the Parians scorned;
And his blockade frustrated by their firm
And stern resistance, building up their walls
Each night much stronger than they'd been before.

Thus foiled, he to a priestess of the shrine
Of Pluto had recourse, who him advised
How he might gain the city. He advanced
According to her counsel to a mound,
Near Ceres' temple, and essayed to ope
The gates : unable, he leaped o'er the fence,
And penetrated to the inner aisles,
To steal some consecrated implement,
Deemed sacrilege to touch. Straight thunders pealed,
And lightnings flashed, appalling objects loomed
In sight in threatening attitudes, the place
Shook, as though by a sudden earthquake rent,
And then grim darkness the succeeding gloom
Rendered more dreadful. He was struck with fright,
Remorse, and horror, and as swiftly fled
As fear permitted, in his headlong race
Vaulting the fence so heedless, that he fell
And put his thigh bone out of joint, and hurt
His knee severely. He was carried back
On board-o'-ship, and quickly after left
The isle he 'd failed to conquer, yet laid waste,
A wanton havoc : and on his return
Was tried for treason, when his only crime
Against his country was his ill success :
Yet how much had he sinned against himself,
His honour and renown ! how soon his pride
Was humbled, hatred chastened, and revenge
By retribution scourged ! Thus Nemesis **
Is ever on the watch for souls that stray
From rectitude : with wheels, and helm, and wings
Accoutred, over land and sea she hies,
Swift as the wind, to punish human crimes.
Now the vile rabble against him, their god
Erstwhile, whom they had lauded to the skies

With frantic acclamation, howl and shout
And hiss in deep abhorrence ; nor could dogs
At a poor beggar bark with louder noise.
With sloughing wounds that had to gangrene turned,
With pain acute attended, he was dragged
Before the court, unable then to speak
To plead his cause : his foes attempted hard
To exact the forfeit of his life, well pleased
Him to destroy, whose former merits vexed
Their envy : but his glorious deeds performed
At Lemnos and at Marathon his life
Saved, but to lose it only a few days hence,
Mined by disease and sorrow ; yet amerced
In heavy mulct ; the penalty imposed,
In lieu of death, being fifty talents,—paid
By his son, Cimon, after he was dead.

Thus Hamet's malediction heavy fell
On him : and so all injuries redound
Eventually on such as have aggressed,
Or wronged. He had too deeply quaffed the cup
Of pride, and drained it to the very dregs ;
Inflamed by malice, by revenge consumed,
Self ruined. So the bloated drunkard dies,
A horrid death ! his body not with blood,
But filled with liquid fire, self kindled, burns
With purple flames : aghast he looks, and shrieks,
And sputters hell, and struggling hard, drops dead.

At Susa, now in turn the royal court
Of great Darius, had arrived, depressed
By his defeat, and fearful of the fate
That ill success, accountable to power
Despotic, is too apt in any cause,

Although insuperable it may be,
To bring, the Median chief, who in his train
Had dragged the Eretrian captives, instant death
Anticipating, or a doom still worse,
An ignominious servitude, more dire
Than death itself. But on them smiled the king,
Benevolent and bland, too nobly great
On whom his arms had humbled and subdued
To wreak his spite: it is the base who hurt
The feeble; magnanimity disdains
Such paltry satisfaction. Though he 'd sworn
Them to destroy, like a lopped wood of pines,**
At first, when smarting with the sense of wrongs
They had inflicted; yet as Time the sting
Had drawn from out the wound, and eased the pain,
He now relented from his ire, and them
Forgave: for Pity whispered at his heart,
"Revenge will prove the ripened fruit that 's plucked,
Which, when 't is bitten, shews the worm within:
And Cruelty is Cowardice disguised,
Thought a bravo, when merely a poltroon."
Listening to Pity's pleading voice, thus he
From all asperity refrained, nor death
Awarded them, nor yet a dungeon damp
And foul and dark, with Solitude to hold
Communion, converse only with their thoughts,
To question Terror, and to hear Despair
Answer with groans and shrieks, the common fate
Reserved for patriots now; for kings no more
Are heroes, as of old, but shake with dread
Instinctive at a shadow, and in gaols
And prisons now immure the ghosts they fear:
But, on the contrary, allotted them
Lands and a home at Ardericca,—famed

For bitumen and oil and salt, produced
Together in a well,—where happy days
They spent beneath the shade of palms and vines
And olives, blessing in their prayers the king ;
Yet not forgetting their own native land,
Their lost Eretria, oft on summer's eve
Their talk, and oft remembered in their dreams.
Nor did the monarch against Datis vent
An useless indignation ; but prepared
A greater expedition against Greece
Forthwith. To all the cities in his power
Were emissaries sent corn to provide,
Provisions, horses, transports, and a force
Proportionate to their means ; and in the spring
In person he intended them to lead,
Determined to repair the late defeat,
And victory secure. But whilst he planned
A fresh invasion, a dispute arose
Amongst his sons, who should succeed his sire,
And mount the throne, in case of his decease
In foreign parts ; for by the Persian law
'T was needful for the king to name his heir
Before he left the country. On the plea
Of primogeniture, the eldest born
Claimed the inheritance ; but he was son
Of Gobryas' daughter, who was but a prince :
While Xerxes, his competitor, his right
Founded on his descent from Cyrus, who
Was father of his mother, and the first
Of Persian kings, to whom the Persians owed
Their independence from the Median rule.
This title by his mother, who enjoyed
Unbounded influence with Darius, urged,
Was not however yet acknowledged, when

At Susa, Demaratus, the dethroned
Monarch of Sparta arrived, from his own realms
Fled in disgrace. He soon perceived the power
Atossa wielded ; and to pay his court
To her and Xerxes, counselled them to press
His suit in fashion after Spartan forms,
Where children born after their sires the throne
Possessed, succeeded to the regal power,
Preferred to elder brethren who were born
Before the accession : that Darius was
A subject at Artobazanes' birth ;
But that his own occurred when he was king :
And hence more valid were his rights to claim
The sceptre. By these means, and by the arts
Of his ambitious wife, whom empire swayed
More than maternal love, Darius named
Xerxes for his successor to the throne.


And now Darius, after toil immense
To gather all his forces, was prepared
To march, when unexpected news arrived
That Egypt had revolted. Undismayed
At this new danger, he resolved to lead
His arms the insurrection there to quell,
Ere he invaded Greece. But weak the power
Of man to rule his destiny ; and blind
His sight to see what morrow's sun may bring :
For by exposure to inclement skies,
Aided by cares and watching, he had caught
A pleurisy, whose pangs the struggling heart
Stab like a dagger. With heroic strength
He bore the tortures ; and then found how vain
The pride of princes to avert the doom
Of all humanity, when quivering flesh

And jerking nerves fulfil the stern decree,
Man must expire in agonies, to set
The inextinguishable spirit free.

It was a pile magnificent where lay
Darius sick. The walls of sun dried bricks,
Inlaid with slabs of alabaster, carved
With signs and figures, and inscriptions cut
In arrow-headed letters, roofs upheld,
And terraces: the former tiled with plates
Of gold; the latter planted with all sorts
Of trees and shrubs and flowers, whose foliage hung
Depending, and a grateful umbrage shed
During the noon-day heats, and in the air
Dispersed their perfumes: while beneath the domes,
Long rows of columns, formed of blocks immense
Of marble, laid without cement or lime
So artfully, the junctions were not seen,
Extended like a forest: courts with founts
Bubbling and sparkling in the solar beam,
Interminable lines of steps, where paced
The camels mounting, loaded with the spoils
Of provinces, and lawns and parks well stocked
With game, the building circled, which contained
Within, apartments sumptuous, rooms on rooms,
So interwolved, they seemed a labyrinth,
By cedar rafters held aloft, with sheets
Of gold and silver overspread, in heaps
Beyond profusion. On the plaster raised,
In stucco, ramped around, in various groups,
The lion and the unicorn, enclosed
Within a border strung with roses, gilt
And painted, Persia's emblem then, but now
Thine, Albion! and the symbols of thy strength,

And power supreme on earth. The hall of state,
Surrounded by seven chambers on each side,
Each with a dozen pillars, was adorned
With six and thirty, fluted, and with heads
Of horses mounted for their capitals,
Adossed, with back to back, between whose necks
Ran up a cypress beam to bear the roof
Of lapis lazuli, where shone a sky
Cerulean, set with myriad twinkling stars,
The counterpart of heaven : in the niches,
Cut in the walls, were vases holding flowers,
Or rare or beautiful, or odours drawn
From Indian barks or gums, too sweet for sense
To take its fill, that drugged the atmosphere
With balmy stupor : all along the front,
Between the pillars, where the curtains drawn**
Allowed the sight to range, the view reposed
On fairy land, on forests, woods, and groves,
On downy hillocks, amber streams, and plains
Pastured by numerous flocks ; a sylvan scene
That pleased the eye, and gratified the soul
With signs of plenty, where the Seasons filled
Their horns unceasing, where no winter's frost
Abundance intermitted, nor the sun,
Too fiery, scorched or withered up the bloom,
Still blushing on the soil : while on the floor
Were carpets spread, of fine Milesian wool,
Wrought in the looms of Babylon, and dyed
With tinctures vying with the floral hues
Of summer, and a mead thick strewn with flowers
Appeared, when Nature in her gaudiest dress
Turns frolic. In the centre stood the throne,
Of massive gold, enriched with gems, and placed
Between the central columns, on a dais


More elevated than the pavement, where
Propped and supported, now Darius sat,
Pale, thin, and haggard, yet in regal state
And dignity, resolved to die a king.
Robed in a tunic of alternate stripes
Of white and purple, with the cydaris,
The mark of sovereignty, invested, high
Towering to a point, his sceptre grasped
In feeble grip, his feet upon a stool
Of gold, he looked the pageant of a king,
And still the grandeur. Servants, armed with fans,
The flies tormenting chased, or cooled the air
Around him, placing o'er their mouths their hands,
Lest their own breaths should royalty attain;
And that corruption, fast to rottenness
Decaying, soil. His spear, and bow, and sword,
Quiver, and dagger, Malek held, his slave
The most attached, who needed not to feign
A grief assumed, his own was too sincere:
While round him gathered swarms of courtiers, decked
With rings, chains, necklaces, and bracelets, clothed
In silken tissues, who with loud lament
Deplored their loss, yet only vexed to lose
Their influence, all whose sorrow was for self:
These are the lice that crawl about a king.
Arranged in rows, the Melophori stood,**
Armed with their staves, tipped with a golden knob
Shaped like an apple; next the body guard,
Attired in Median costume, unadorned
With jewels, bearing in their hands a lance
Grounded on earth, and with their bows in sheaths
Behind them; and the common soldiers last,
Accoutred in the native Persian dress
Of leathern vest and hose, quoified with a band



And fillets simply, and merely with a spear
Equipped. Lords, princes, satraps, chamberlains
Crowded in shoals, led like the fishy spawn
To fattening friths. And now the harem came,
By eunuchs introduced, and at their head
Atossa walked, and fair Artystone,
With downcast looks, that sadness meekly evinced,
And inward trouble ; yet she still appeared
In beauty irresistible, whose kiss
Might grisly Death scare from Darius' lips :
And Iolante's charms had gained from fate
The favour of his life, whose thread was spun,
And ready to be snicked, were Fate not blind,
As well as deaf, inexorable to all,
However importuned. Both niece and aunt
Were equal matched in loveliness and grace :
The one a summer flower, full blown, in all
Its pride ; the other but a vernal bud,
Which ne'ertheless as rich a promise gives
Of quite as fine a fruit. Nor absent there
Was found Viasa from his patron lord,
But wrapped in gloom, he stood behind the ranks,
Nor thought on love, forgetting then to think
On aught but grief ; but by the dying king
Remembered, who on him affixed his eyes,
And beckoned to approach, and him addressed
Thus, in a low and scarce articulate voice.
" I hear Eternity, that calls me hence,
And would not die till I have made amends
For all offences. To confess our faults,
And rectify what we have done amiss,
Is next to never doing ill at all :
'T is virtue, and approved of God. Of all
Collected here, thee only have I wronged,

And now repair it, and my promise pledged
Redeem. To thee I Iolante give,
Thine own by double right, by valour gained,
And won by love. Espouse her, and may joy
Never be absent from your home, nor peace
Desert your hearts !" Then to Atossa next
He turned, and thus addressed her. " Unto you
I leave our son : him guide in princely rule ;
Instruct him how his father's faults to shun,
And how surpass his merits ; stir not up
Ambition in his soul, nor avarice,
Pride, vanity, revenge, or malice rouse ;
But teach him that a monarch is but man,
And reigns o'er equals !" Then Artystone
He next accosted. " Would I could bequeath
The love I bear thee ; but its memory
Will stay behind : such bliss it 's yielded me,
Its recollection must afford a balm
To solace care : the picture of a friend
Is dear in absence of that friend beloved ;
So the faint image of a joy that 's past
Presents a shadow of it that may please.
O may thy days like perfumes sweet ascend
To heaven upward, in empyrean skies
To meet me when thy mortal race is run !"
Down flowed their sorrows faster as the king
Ended his speech : their sighs and sobs replied
In lieu of words, since dole had struck their tongues
Dumb, or in two 't was joy as much as dole ;
Who in perhaps those transient moments felt
Heaven and hell at once, although conceived
Immeasurably distant, yet conjoined
Sometimes together merely by a thought.
But now the priests, in sombre vestures clad,

The flocks of crows that to the carrion fly,
Arrived, with implements of office charged,
The Havan cup, shaped like a lotus flower,
The sacred casket, and the bunch of twigs,
And to the altar, set before the throne,
Advanced, where burned the holy fire, by heaps
Of myrrh, and frankincense, and fragrant oils,
And cedar faggots fed. Before them stepped
A band of youths, equipped in garments white,
Swinging their silver censers till the clouds
Of incense filled the room, when near the king
The Destur Mobed standing, from the book *
Of prayers, the Zendavesta, read this hymn,
Joined by the other priests in tuneful song:—
“ When first created, Man was spirit pure,
And unembodied, through the universe
Floating, and visiting along his path
Worlds infinitely distant, placed apart
In space illimitable. Poised in thought,
He winged his way through ether, as the fly
On its light gossamer ascends the clouds ;
Surveyed all things, perceived without an eye,
And without senses all emotions felt,
Perfectly happy. But his soul in flesh
Clothed Ormuzd, that with man, hence thus endued,
He might contend against the Evil One ;
And for his spirit darkened and eclipsed
Gave his own light instead, for evermore
To shine till Ahriman should be subdued.
Then Ormuzd Eerienne made, for man
His blest abode, where all the Seasons smiled
Benignant, save the Winter, whose cold breath
Crisped there a month the running brooks with ice,
But only that the Spring might more embalm



The vernal air, the Summer shed his bloom
More fragrant, and more rich might Autumn pour
Her fruits delicious. But the winter snake
Div fashioned from the ocean in the north,⁸⁷
And it to Eerienne sent to smite
Its hills with snow. Then other places formed
Ormuzd for man : but every sort of ill,
Pain, poison, pestilence, storm, earthquake, war,
And lastly Death, invented Abriman
To thwart and spoil his rival's work, and turn
His good to evil, what was without fault
To render sinful, that what misery lacked
Might henceforth lack felicity. Thus Death
Entered the world, our bane, and yet our boon.
All things must die, the universal law
Of nature, which though introduced by him,
The Author of all Ill, yet is approved
And sanctioned by the Author of all Good.
Each particle of earth was living once,
Has moved, and breathed, and felt, and vital forms
Once constituted,—the body of a gnat,
Or of a mammoth,—and still teems with life
Organic, bursting with intelligence.
This lot has man in common with the worm :
Joint labourers, they dig and plough the ground,⁸⁸
And eat it for their bread : then shall the earth
Its fatness lend, and not claim back its own !
How full of death is life ! Birds of the air,
Beasts of the field, and fishes of the sea,
Find in our stomachs sepulchres and tombs :
With how much death our bodies are composed !
As life is living death, so death is life,
A never ending circle : life expires,
Of death delivered, which in turn gives birth

To life eternal : what was dust corrupt
Becomes a beam of glory : all ascend
Progressive till the highest Heaven is reached.
The brilliant beetle, with its gems that flash
The diamond's lustre to the setting sun,
Was born in dung : the limber moth once crawled
A loathsome grub : the confined crysalis
Evolves a butterfly, whose scarlet pride
The ruby dims, and pales the tulip's dye :
So man, created from the clod, divests
Humanity, to assume the angel bright."

The service ended ; in the fire were flung
The twigs, and floods of perfume licked the flames,
From golden goblets poured, pleased to be fed
With such delicious dainties. Then arose
Up on his throne, supported by his slaves,
Darius, eyeing fixedly the sun
Declining to the horizon now, and said :—
" It is the hour of rest, the very hour
I always wished to die. A holy calm
Sits in the air, and wearied Nature lulls
To slumber ; Evening half shuts her eye,
And dreams of heaven, smiling in her thoughts ;
The date tree bends its lofty head in prayer :
There 's not a murmur ; all is hushed to greet
The dying day, so solemn is the death
Of but so short a time : how awful then
Will be the scene when all must cease to be !
My body moults its feathers, but my soul,
New plumed, now quivers on the wing to join
The fellowship of angels : from its clay
It struggles to be free, as now the sun
Labours to leave the earth behind it loathes.

O lustrous orb ! art thou the throne of God,
The seat of Paradise ; or do thy beams
But feebly his reflect, whose light unshorn
Not man can see, and live, nor angels view
Undazzled, but with shading pinions screen
The fierceness of his blaze : or in thy course
Through the empyrean, dost thou sometimes see
Him in his secret dwelling place, unveiled
In glory then, and from his fountain fill
Thine urn resplendent : do thy golden clouds
And purple vapours sometimes him receive,
Infolding round, when to the farthest bourn
Of space ne'er ending, on some high behest
Of bounty to a myriad worlds, he hies ?
Whate'er thou art, thou art the symbol seen
Of him invisible, his face in shade,
On which, thus shaded, dares not man to gaze,
No more than he durst look on Death itself.
Thou risest in thy splendour, and the stars
Are blinded by thy glory ; in the air
Thou mountst majestic, passing in thy course
Infinitude ; and thou creat'st each day
Life by thy vital warmth. God spake the word,
And all was made, and Chaos fled away,
Affrighted : so each morning Darkness flies
Before thy coming, and thy silent voice
All Nature hears, Sleep starts to wakefulness,
And Life arises, jubilant from death.
If thou so glorious art, oh ! what must then
Thy Greater be ! Lost in the immensity
Of thought, Archangels to express his power
Would fail, though tongued with thunder, overwhelmed
With wonder and dismay : then how shall Man
Record his praise ! Here on the yawning gulf

Treading 'twixt life and death, I feel how mean
Are all the vanities of earth, its pride,
And its ambition, sorrows, and its joys :
We strive for power, contend for fame, and toil
For wealth or knowledge ; yet 't is all in vain :
But, like a learned volume, Death unfolds
The wisdom infinite that nature holds.
He 's fast descending down the mountain's side—
The glorious Sun ! I see him still—he shines
Yet with a flickering ray—he sinks—he drops.”
That moment dropped Darius in the arms
Of his attendants, by an Angel called
Away from earth, where much if he had sinned,
Yet much had he been tempted : all his faults
Were crimes inseparable from power supreme,
And rank exalted ; but his virtues were
His own ; and many were the noble deeds
He 'd done : what monarchs have performed as much ?
By sound of trumpet, and the herald's voice,
Through all his wide dominions was his death
Proclaimed, and all the courts of justice closed,
And markets shut, and e'en the household fires
Extinguished for the space of seven days,
When by the Magi, by a convex glass
Relighted from the sun, they shone again
On every hearth : thus may the burning thought,
Drawn by the sage from Heaven, through the world
Illuminate the nations, till its blaze
Consume for ever tyrants from the earth.

His body was preserved by means of wax
Rubbed in the skin, and overspread in paste
To keep it fresh, then wrapped with cotton round,
And placed within a rich sarcophagus

Of pure Egyptian alabaster, carved
 With curious figures. To the tomb he 'd built,
 While living, in a rock, close to the town
 And palace of Persepolis, 't was borne
 With regal pomp, and 'midst a mass of gems,
 Robes, carpets, ornaments, and treasures laid ;
 By Bagapates, steward of his wives
 And harem, watched until he died himself ;
 And on a slab of marble was engraved
 The following record : " To my friends I was
 A friend : the first of archers : in the chase
 I bore the palm : that which I would I could."
 The curious traveller may see the tomb,
 Remaining yet, by two pilasters marked,
 With heads of unicorns for capitals,
 And by a group of sculpture, where a man,
 Armed with a bow, before an altar stands,
 Where burns the sacred fire ; above, a globe
 Figures the sun ; and lifted in the air,
 Over the human figure another sits,
 Holding a ring, his upper part alone
 Designed, the rest in spreading garments hid :
 An emblematic symbol of the king.

A few months after, to his bridal couch
 Viasa led his fair, whose blushes shone
 Brighter than amber when Apollo weeps³⁹
 His children dead. But not for sorrow wept
 The maid, I ween : it must have been for joy
 If then she wept, since joy when in excess,
 Though charged with honey, yet is with a sting
 That 's poisoned armed sometimes, which often gives
 As sore a wound as ever grief inflicts.
 That night, while with his amorous sighs he fired

The very air she breathed, the moon looked in,
Well pleased to see how happy human hearts
Can be, united in connubial bliss.
Her smile had cleared the thunder from the brow
Of Jove himself: what must her kiss have been?
With her, his joy and pride, he left the court
Of Persia, and to Hindostan returned,
Where he composed the Mahabharrat, famed⁴⁰
Throughout the east, respected by his king,
And by the people admired, living in ease,
Honour and affluence, in love and peace.

NOTES.

BOOK I.

Note 1, p. 1.

The Palace of Chehl-Menâr, or the "Forty Pillars," is the principal ruin now existing of the ancient town of Persepolis.

2, p. 2.

"The thirsty plant looks up to thee (the cloud), and a gentle shower is thy only answer."

The Mega Duta, or Cloud Messenger, by Calidasa.

3, p. 4.

This is the form of prayer ascribed by Socrates to an ancient sage, and recommended by him to his disciples.

Plato on the Immortality of the Soul.

4, p. 4.

Isaiah, ch. xl., ver. 12.

5, p. 11.

That the ancient Egyptians, Phenicians, and Greeks were acquainted with the properties and use of the loadstone, may be inferred from the myth of Hercules sailing across the ocean in a vase, directed by the arrow of Apollo. The priests of Jupiter Ammon carried the magnet with them in a compass

box, as the Ark of the Covenant of their God, which it was death for the unsanctified to look into. And Homer, 900 years before the Christian era, and 2160 years before the pretended discovery of Marco Paulo, had given a plain hint of the possession of the secret by the priests of Phæacia, who had ships that were inspired by supernatural means to find their way through the sea.—*Odyssey*. Book viii.

The knowledge and use of the "South Pointing" of the magnetic needle twelve centuries before our era, has given to the orographic and hydrographic descriptions of countries by the Chinese, a great superiority over the descriptions of the same kind which Greek or Roman writers have bequeathed to us.

Humboldt's Aspects of Nature.

6, p. 11.

The turquoise, a highly esteemed Persian gem, is thought by geologists to be the fossilized enamel of the tooth of an extinct mastodon.

7, p. 17.

Esther, ch. v., ver. 2.

8, p. 19.

Ajax, by Sophocles.

9, p. 20.

Œdipus at Colonnus, by Sophocles.

10, p. 20.

Plato on the Immortality of the Soul.

11, p. 25.

Mrs. Somerville's Physical Geography.

12, p. 25.

The pearl is said by naturalists to be a sort of tumour, or cancer, produced by the oyster when in a state of disease.

13, p. 26.

An imitation of Sappho's ode.

14, p. 26.

Esther, ch. ii., ver. 12.

15, p. 27.

Under her loosened vest
Fluttered her little breast,
Like birds within their nest
By the hawk frightened.

Longfellow.

BOOK II.

16, p. 34.

“Giavidan Khird,” or the “Wisdom of all Times,” by Kushang, surnamed Pishdad, some parts of which have been translated from the Persian into French.

17, p. 35.

The admonition of Phridun or Feridoun, the Solomon of Persia, to the prince, his son and successor.

18, p. 38.

At the battle of Cadesia, “the standard of the monarchy (Persian) was overthrown and captured in the field—a leathern apron of a blacksmith, who in ancient times had arisen the deliverer of Persia; but this badge of heroic poverty was disguised, and almost concealed, by a profusion of precious gems.”

Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ch. 51.

19, p. 45.

Thasos was anciently renowned for its mines of gold.

20, p. 48.

I have somewhere read that the first name by which the German tribes were known, was Saxons.

BOOK III.

21, p. 55.

Bulbul is the Persian or Turkish name for the nightingale.

22, p. 63.

Mickle's Translation of Camoens' *Lusiad*.

23, p. 67.

No animal was sacrificed on the altars of Apollo at Delos.

24, p. 71.

Some of the ideas in this paragraph I have borrowed from an article I found in the "Liverpool Standard," extracted, I believe, from some magazine.

BOOK IV.

25, p. 76.

The Prytanes were magistrates at Athens, who presided over the Senate, and had the privilege of assembling it when they pleased, festivals excepted.

BOOK V.

26, p. 100.

The Spartans wore red clothes when on a military campaign, in order that, if wounded, the sight of their blood might not be so readily distinguished by their enemies.

27, p. 104.

The Polemarch was the third of the nine Archons who were the chief magistrates of Athens.

28, p. 109.

Theseus, one of the fabulous heroic kings of Athens, then considered a demigod.

29, p. 110.

Echetlus.

30, p. 113.

The mitre was a species of belt, sometimes of metal, and stuffed inside, worn below the breastplate to protect the abdomen.

BOOK VI.

31, p. 120.

The paratonnerre is the French term for the iron rod attached to buildings to conduct the lightning away.

32, p. 122.

Grote's History of Greece, part ii., ch. 36.

33, p. 124.

To destroy like pines was a common proverb in Greece, meaning a final destruction.—*Herodotus*. Book vi., ch. 37.

34, p. 128.

Esther, ch. i. ver. 6.

35, p. 129.

The Melophori were a kind of chamberlains or household officers in the Persian court, selected from the body guard.

36, p. 132.

The Destur Mobed was a priest of the third or highest dignity in the religious system of Zoroaster.

37, p. 133.

Div is an oriental appellation for the Devil, Satan, or the Principle of Evil.

38, p. 133.

In loosening and refining the mould, the common earthworm is the fellow labourer with man ; it eats earth, and after extracting the nutritious part, ejects the refuse, which is the finest soil, and may be seen in heaps at the mouth of its burrow. It is said that there is not a particle of the finer vegetable mould, but what has passed through the intestines of a worm. Thus the most feeble of living things is employed by Providence to accomplish the most important ends.

Mrs. Somerville's Physical Geography.

39, p. 137.

The amber was supposed to be the tear drops of Apollo, who shed them on the occasion of his repairing to the Hyperboreans, when his children had been slain, and himself expelled from heaven. — *Apollonius Rhodius.*

40, p. 138.

The Mahabharat is a very voluminous Epic Poem, containing upwards of 100,000 lines, therefore more than double the size of the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer conjoined. It is written in the Sanscrit, no longer an oral tongue, but still the sacred language of the Hindoos. Some portions of the Poem have been translated by English authors.





